

GRANADA

BY

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ALFRED A. KNOFF



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GRANADA

GRANADA is a personally conducted readers' tour not only to the more famous 'sights', but to the small villages where the ancient Spain survives shorn of its ancient glory. Prof. Peers traces the history of the Alhambra—that memorial of the one successful invasion of Islam on to Western soil—from the early days of Moorish rule to the Reconquest. We visit with him the churches and carmenes, or private gardens, some dating back many centuries, and we savour the discovery of simple folk living amongst the relics of their forgotten ancestors

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GRANADA



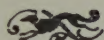
THE ALHAMBRA: TOWER OF SIETE SUELOS

GRANADA

by

E. ALLISON PEERS

Author of "Royal Seville," "Santander," &c.



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TO
J. D. M. FORD
A NEW YEAR REMEMBRANCE

Preface

It is a real pleasure to acknowledge debts of three different kinds which I owe in this book to distinguished citizens of Granada. First and foremost, I am beholden to the generosity of the University of Granada, which enabled me to remain in the city for sufficient time to write it—for, like my other books on Spain, it was written among the scenes it portrays. Then, I am grateful to the owners—too many to name individually—of the houses and gardens described in the pages which follow, for permission, readily given, to visit them. Lastly, the manuscript of the book was kindly read by D. Fernando Sainz, who knows both city and surrounding country well, so as to ensure its being free from errors.

E. A. P.

THE UNIVERSITY,
LIVERPOOL.

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I

THE SETTING

FOR all its charm, the Alhambra is not the whole of Granada. To be seen at its best, this gem must be seen in its setting, and that not at a glance, but with sufficient time for the contemplation of its beauty. It is really essential for those who would appreciate it to leave its halls and gardens, to step back from it, and look at it from afar; to roam about the city which lies at its feet; and even to explore the wonderful Vega all around it—that plain which Orientals compare with the Plain of Damascus, and which is said first to have attracted the Moors to Granada and to have led them to prize it as the chief of their Spanish possessions.

It is not a mere hyperbole to speak of Granada and its fortress-palace as the “pearl of the Sierra Nevada.” There is force for once in an outworn metaphor of the guide-book. That snowy range which dominates the surrounding country can never be forgotten, once it has been seen. From

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whichever direction the city is approached, the first thing the traveller is conscious of is the Sierra—inexorable, impenetrable, wrapt in its heavy mantle of winter or with its long, irregular line of snow-bound crests lying softly against the azure sky in summer.

Out at sea, it is infallibly sighted and borne in the memory by those who have never seen a stone of Spain beside. So the Moors first saw it, twelve hundred years ago, when they landed in their hosts on the southern shores of the Peninsula, and, with the proselytising exhortations of the Prophet still ringing in their ears, drove its inhabitants fiercely before them. Centuries after, the reconquering Christians, marching southward and eastward, must first have felt the transcending snowy presence ere they so much as saw the city which they coveted so greatly for their own. For how many generations were they to gaze at the Alhambra towers—at the foot of the mountains, nestling like some glowing pearl in a setting of choicest brilliants—and to go down to the grave with the gem still in unsanctified Moslem hands ! Two hundred and forty-four years were to pass between San Fernando's conquest of Seville and another and very different Fernando's conquest of Granada. During all that time, from 1248 till

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1492, the Moors in their fastness looked up at the snow-clad mountain-range as to the symbol of a protecting deity: the Christians looked up at it from the plain, as to the symbol of an unattainable desire.

What scenes the Sierra Nevada must have witnessed in those centuries of intermittent warfare! What histories an eternal watcher upon its heights could tell! Such a supernatural chronicler alone could lift the veil shrouding the foundation of Garnatha—Granada—which probably existed as a small fortified town in Roman times before ever the Arab hosts were quick to utilise the advantages of its situation. Such a watcher only could unravel the intrigues of the Moorish dynasties which ruled in the *Casba-Alhamrá*—the Red Castle—defying the Christian armies to uproot them from a spot which they had made so peculiarly their own. For, indeed, it must have seemed in the Middle Ages as though the kingdom of Granada was to remain a thing apart from the surrounding kingdoms of divided Spain, a monument to Islam in a Christian land, for ever.

Then, in the fulness of time, when hope long deferred had made many a heart sick, came Fernando and Isabel, known to posterity as the

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Catholic Monarchs, uniting the crowns of Aragon, Castile and Leon, and directing their allied forces, as none had been able to do before them, to the reconquest of the kingdom of Granada and the expulsion of the Moorish rulers from Spain. Seventeen years of their joint reign were sufficient to accomplish what under different conditions might well have been a fact two centuries earlier—the unity of the entire Spanish realm under one Christian rule.

It was not a single short straightforward siege, or a series of battles alone, that brought Moorish Granada to the ground. Statecraft, as well as battlecraft, played its part. So Washington Irving shows us in the vivid pages of his *Conquest of Granada*, where he describes in detail the events of the last ten years of the campaign. One by one, Fernando, in his own punning words, picked out the seeds of the *granada*—the Spanish word means pomegranate—taking first Alhama, then Ronda, Loxa, Illora, Málaga, Almería, Baza and Guadix. Then he concentrated his forces on the capital. Not the least favourable circumstance to his cause was the three-cornered strife between King Muley Abul Hassan (1465-1485), his popular and intrepid brother and commander-in-chief Abdallah, surnamed El Zagal (The Valiant), and his son,

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Abu Abdallah, or Boabdil, the last ruler of Granada.

Round the person of Boabdil have concentrated the forces of history, legend and invention, till he has become the principal figure in the story of the Reconquest. His mother, Ayxa, surnamed "The Chaste," was a woman of unusual determination and strength, but the son was known from his childhood as "The Unfortunate," and his later history justified the appellation. When the court astrologers, it is said, cast the horoscope at his birth, they were seized with fear at what they read there. "Allah alone commands the fate of empires!" they exclaimed. "It is written, indeed, that this child shall ascend the throne, but also that in his reign shall be accomplished the downfall of our kingdom."

When Boabdil was still but a youth, he was brought by a faction of nobles into open conflict with his father, and proclaimed by them to be king—the "young king"—el Rey Chico. From this time forward, there were two kings in Granada, each making war upon the Christians, but each also opposing the other. First, Boabdil reigned in the Alhambra; then he was captured in battle and imprisoned in the castle of Lucena; his father regained the royal palace, and, on his

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return, he found that the allegiance of most of his supporters had vanished. Soon after this, El Zagal was set up as a third king by the invitation of the people of Granada. Abul Hassan, old and exhausted, retired to a secluded southern village, where he was allowed to live—and before long to die—unmolested. Boabdil, on the other hand, awaited a favourable moment to return to Granada from his place of self-appointed exile; a battle with dreadful carnage was fought in the streets of the city; and a state of open warfare ensued, of which Fernando and Isabel were quick at every moment to take advantage.

By the end of 1489, El Zagal, viewing with equal dismay the successes of the Christians and of Boabdil, decided that Allah had willed Granada no longer to be his; choosing the lesser of two evils, therefore, he determined to submit to the Christians. Boabdil, who was never too far-sighted, received the news with delight, but wiser men than he saw that, far from aiding their cause, it had brought the beginning of the end. Recognising Boabdil's weakness, and harassed no longer by the forces of the doughty warrior El Zagal, Fernando addressed an ultimatum to the city of Granada, demanding its total sur-

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render. The inevitable refusal preluded the last phase of the century-long struggle. Boabdil and his armies fought desperately and planned courageously, and it was not till the Christians had destroyed and burned villages and set fire to the abundant crops in the Vega, that the supplies of the city became exhausted, and the decision to capitulate was taken.

So Granada fell, and on the second day of the year 1492, when both the Sierra and the lower hills of the Vega were bathed in snow, the city was delivered into the hands of the Christian sovereigns, and Boabdil and his train departed never to return.

There was crying in Granada when the sun was going down ;
Some calling on the Trinity—some calling on Mahoun.
Here passed away the Koran—there in the Cross was borne—
And here was heard the Christian bell—and there the Moorish
horn.

Te Deum Laudamus ! was up the Alcala sung :
Down from the Alhambra's minarets were all the crescents
flung ;
The arms thereon of Aragon they with Castile's display ;
One King comes in in triumph—one weeping goes away.¹

We can picture more readily the scenes leading

¹ Lockhart's *Ancient Spanish Ballads*.

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up to the Reconquest if we learn to know the city of Granada by living within the ruins of its walls. To-day the principal streets are on the level of the plain, but those two great hills which rise steeply to the north and to the south of the River Darro (which, with the Genil and the Beiro, waters Granada) were in Moorish times the most important parts of the city. The Alhambra hill, itself divided into two by a gorge, now wooded, which once was the burial-ground of Moorish kings, attracted multitudes of refugee settlers from the parts of Spain conquered by the Christians, by reason of its excellent fortifications. The opposite hill of the Albaicín, now a poor and neglected quarter, was a prosperous suburb inhabited by many noble families, who often showed a striking solidarity at times of disruption and unrest. Especially united was it in its faithful support of Boabdil. It was here that, as a youth, he was first proclaimed king in his father's lifetime. Here, when he returned from captivity, he found his entrance unopposed, and through the streets of the Albaicín he passed by night, unmolested, till he reached the fortress of the Alcazaba. Here, more dramatically, he returned when his foeman was no longer Muley but El Zagal, and, leaving his supporters in the back-

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ground, knocked with the hilt of his scimitar on the Albaicín gate, demanding his right of entry. It was the dead of night.

“Who is this,” demanded the sentry, holding a light, “that seeks to enter the city at such an hour?”

“Your king,” returned Boabdil, briefly. And, as he spoke, the guard fell back, overcome by his unexpected appearance, and made way for his followers to pass.

From house to house they rode, once within the walls, rousing all their supporters to the battle. No noiseless entry was this, but an assault by one confident of victory. “Your king! Rise and obey!” was the call, and the call was nobly answered. Torches flickered and gleamed, swords flashed, trumpet-notes mingled with the cries of war, and, long ere day dawned, El Zagal, who held the Alhambra, was awakened, even as Muley had been, by the sound of battle, and looked out from a citadel of defence upon a citadel armed for the attack.

Perhaps it is by entering the Albaicín quarter and climbing to the terrace in front of the church of San Nicolás that we can best live again the history of those stirring days. At the least, we can realise how hill called to hill when Alhambra and

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Albaicín were doing battle in days when Granada had almost as many houses as it has inhabitants now. And this, though to-day all is forgotten, and the scene, especially toward sunset, is one of unsullied peace.

There before us, across the valley, the russet towers of the Alhambra are displayed in their grandeur. Stern and strong, for all the warmth of their colouring, they challenge by their proud aggressiveness and even more by the unexpected fulness of their display. No wonder, we exclaim, if there was rivalry, in a warlike age, between the dwellers on these rival hills! Even to-day the Alhambra looks the Albaicín in the face, as though contemplating whether it should strike once and again, or crush for ever.

No suggestion of beauty greets us from those bare, tawny walls, unless it be conveyed by their graceful *ajimeces*, or twin windows, which can be discerned here and there in the distance. All the beauty is in the general effect—in the many-towered fortress rising sheer from the wooded gorge below: in the city spread out before us all around: in the silver Genil glinting in the sunlight beyond: in the blue haze of the Vega: in the ever-watching, white-robed Sierra. Widening circles of beauty: very lovely, each and all. But

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across the valley and within those towers there is lovelier. I come here willingly to gaze upon the varied prospect, be it at dawn, at midday or at sunset. But I linger in the Alhambra, hardly able to leave it, all day long.

II

THE GEM

NOT the least attractive feature of the Alhambra is the beauty of its approach, a beauty created, for the most part, little more than a century ago, perhaps expressly, that it might kindle the imagination and induce receptivity of mind. These are the two essentials, let it be said here and now, for all who would fully enjoy the charms awaiting them.

A narrow, winding street, disfigured by curiosities, leads upward to a sculptured gateway crowned with three stone pomegranates, and showing the royal eagle of the Catholic Monarchs and the imperial eagle of their grandson, Charles V. Pass inside the arch, and you are in the loveliest park in Spain. Straight ahead mounts a steep central carriage drive, from which, to left and right, two paths diverge more steeply still. Each of these roads is bordered with overhanging elms, in full leaf as early as mid-March, the tops of which often meet, forming a triumphal arch

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of verdure. All around is thick foliage, concealing well-nigh completely the Alhambra towers above : through this the sun at its hottest can only filter. Down each side of either path run streams of water, making gentle and continuous music all the day long :

Las fuentes de Granada. . . .
¿ Habéis sentido
en la noche de estrellas perfumada
algo más doloroso que su triste gemido ?

Before the luxurious cars of plutocratic foreigners were allowed to spoil the scene, no sound could be heard in the Alameda of the Alhambra but the *canción del agua*—the running water—and the no less exquisite songs of the nightingales, which by day as well as by night haunt its trees.

It is hard not to linger here, hardest of all in the hot summer days when the city is parched and dusty, or in the evenings of spring when the sun, sinking low behind the Pomegranate Gate, gilds the trees in its path and floods the avenue with light till it becomes a very road of gold. But the wise man mounts slowly by the path on the left, past a refreshing waterfall, and a terrace with stone couches where he may rest more contentedly than below and disentangle the symbolism of the

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Renaissance fountain proclaiming the fertility of the region of Granada and of the three streams which water it. This, like the Pomegranate Gate and the notorious Palace of Charles V above, is the work of the Emperor's architect, Pedro Machuca.

A sharp turn to the left, at the head of the terrace, leads to the magnificent fourteenth-century Gate of Justice—a double tower rather than a gate in the usual sense, with an entrance at either end, and a dark, twisting passage within, enabling a handful of defenders to hold the entire building without difficulty. This, one feels, whether or no it be true that the Cadi administered public justice there, is a gateway worthy of the Alhambra ; and so the Catholic Monarchs thought when they made their ceremonial entry by way of it on the famous 2nd of January. As we approach, we notice outlined on the outer gate a hand, the Mohammedan talisman and symbol of power, its five fingers representing also the five precepts of Islamic law. Above the inner arch is a key : the superstition current in Moorish times had it that until the hand without should grasp the key within the kingdom of Granada should endure.

Beyond the Gate of Justice, higher still, is the Wine Gate or Puerta del Vino. Tradition says



PALACE OF CHARLES V

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that in Moorish times wine was sold here, but the name is more probably due to a confusion between *alhamrá* (red) and *aljamra* (wine), for the Moors themselves called it the Alhambra Gate purely and simply. It was originally a part of the Alhambra fortifications, which were demolished in the sixteenth century to allow the construction of the plateau of which it forms a corner. Here we are now standing, with undistinguished buildings all around us, looking among them for the Arab Palace, which is the principal glory of the Alhambra.

The *plaza* itself is named from the cistern which the Christians constructed there immediately after the taking of Granada. It is spacious and open, planted with firs, laid out in beds of columbine and iris, enclosed in clipped box hedges, and haunted by pigeons all day long. From the far side of the plateau is a view of the Albaicín, of its white houses, pointed cypresses and tiny gardens, hardly less lovely than the complementary view from San Nicolás.

To the right, only too painfully evident, is the enormous and pretentious palace erected by Charles V with the tribute of the Moors at the cost of who can say how many dainty Moorish courts demolished to exalt imperial pride and

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ostentation. The palace was never completed. It is deserted, as, in spite of its grandeur, it deserves to be, so tragically is it at variance with its surroundings. Occasionally, in the summer, it is used for civic celebrations. But, as a rule, its occupants are workmen sawing timber, its majestic galleries are empty, and its floors, trodden by none, are covered with shavings and dead leaves blown in by the wind from outside. The modern tourist, wrapt in the beauty of the Arab Palace near by, scarcely troubles to put his head inside the gate.

But where *is* the Arab Palace? Or rather, where is its principal entrance, for presumably these uninviting walls around the plateau are the guardians of the treasures we are anxious to see? No sign of a gateway. The bare walls repel us: we almost decide to retrace our path to the Alameda. The only attraction here is the view over the city.

I well remember my feelings of bewilderment and disappointment, many years ago, when on a first visit to the Alhambra I found myself landed on the plateau. Not for some time, far away to the right, half obscured by the walls, did I discover a mean little entrance—what might be an entrance, at least, since a group of slouching “guides”



COURT OF THE MYRTLES

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stood near it. Sure enough, a peseta was demanded of me ; and, before I had commented to my companion on the insignificance of the approach, we were standing speechless before a scene of surpassing beauty.

The Court of the Myrtles ! A flood of light overwhelmed us as we entered a spacious *patio*, uncovered to the dazzling sun and the azure sky overhead. This was, indeed, the Alhambra ! We were in a large rectangular court, in the centre of which lay a long narrow *alberca*, or basin, of clear, green water, with goldfish swimming lazily in the sunshine, and a fountain at either end. In the background was a massive, battlemented tower, reflected with deceiving clearness in the cool depths beneath. Down either side of the *alberca* ran a low, clipt hedge of fragrant myrtle, banked with violets, and at three of the four corners grew orange trees (of which only one now remains) loaded with golden fruit. That sudden vision of beauty I have never forgotten. Many hours I have stolen from the solitude of the Alhambra since then : many days I have passed, delightfully dreaming, in its gardens and halls. But its initial revelation was unique, and I never tire of my vain attempts to recapture that thrill of beauty.

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Nowadays, as the guides will tell you, the Arab Palace of the Alhambra is "greatly reformed" under the hand of a progressive architect. One effect of that praiseworthy reformation is that instead of passing straight into the Myrtle Court the visitor is educated to the beauties of the palace more gradually. An original entrance has been restored, and we now visit the first, second and third Arab palaces in turn. For the Palace is in reality not one, but three, the Moorish method of building being to add court to court as one king or another might desire. The result of this to-day is to destroy the unity of the whole, but to give it additional interest. And its lack of unity is less noticeable now than in olden times, since many communications have been made between parts of the buildings originally kept separate.

The outward bareness and unattractiveness of the Alhambra, which contrasts so strikingly with its interior magnificence, is not wholly due, as some suppose, to its being a fortress as well as a palace. The Moors set great store by the intimacy of their private life, which no unbidden stranger might profane. They constructed their buildings, therefore, with few and small windows, the larger windows looking out invariably upon

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the interior courts of their mansions, or belonging to the upper stories of their towers.

About the construction of the Arab Palace there is something essentially insubstantial and ethereal. The slender columns, whether single or grouped, seem quite overborne by the apparently enormous weight of masonry which they sustain, and it is not until one realises how much of this is merely wood that the secret is explained. Then the symbolic origin of the curious style becomes clear. It is all an idealised reminiscence of the nomad life of the desert. The columns are nothing more than tent-poles, the vaulted ceilings are the tents, while the brilliantly-coloured walls, with their fantastic adornments, represent the flimsy, filmy draperies, the tapestries and hanging rugs that gave an air of easy luxuriance to the tent interiors.

The decorative work in the Arab Palace is of that peculiar intricacy and richness which is popularly associated with the Alhambra. The walls, every inch of them, are covered with arabesques of the most amazing splendour, which at first appear to have been traced and sculptured by hand, but are, in fact, worked on plaster of Paris laid in plates upon the smooth surface of the wall. Interwoven with the somewhat artificial

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geometrical designs and the less frequent motifs of greater vitality are mottoes in Arabic characters, extolling the greatness of Allah, the exploits of Moslem sovereigns, and the beauty of the Alhambra's halls and gardens. Originally all this stucco-work was adorned with many colours, of which little now remains but the faded blue of an alcove or of a background in some unnoticed and protected spot. Perhaps the greatest wonder is that so much, whether of colour or design, should have remained at all, after centuries of maltreatment and neglect, and of the inevitable ravages which sun, wind and storm combine to make, to say nothing of the deliberate and wanton destruction of invasions and wars.

Next to the walls of the palace, the parts of it which attract most attention are the vaulted ceilings composed of innumerable tiny cells, and forming, as it were, immense honeycombed domes of an intricacy not easy to credit. From this point and that hang pendants of similar formation, resembling stalactites, of the same uniformity and richness. They are all of plaster, and have been cast in moulds, but the effect could hardly be more charming were they in stone.

A third method of decoration is the use of glazed tiles, or *azulejos*, in many colours, both for

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wainscoting the walls and for roofing. These the Moors introduced into Spain from the East, and they are still a well-known Spanish manufacture. From a distance, especially, the brightness and variety of colour of these tiles is very pleasing, and their coolness and cleanness make them particularly welcome in the summer. Many of them bear the arms of the Moorish kings ; others reproduce the Persian motif of the fir-tree ; others, again, are late, as is shown by their device of " Plus ultra," the ambitious motto of the Emperor Charles V.

All this is so much unlike anything to which the visitor from the West is accustomed that he should not find it difficult to transport himself into mediæval times of his own imaginings, especially if the brightness and clearness of the southern air can intoxicate him with their energising power. He can people the towers and terraces with Moorish knights in luxuriously-appointed armour—courts and halls, now empty and silent, with nobles and fair ladies in robes of brilliant whiteness or many-hued silks—the upper apartments used in winter (most of which are now modified, neglected or destroyed) with those same courtiers and ladies, adorned profusely with gold and precious stones, reclining on luxurious divans,

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in halls lit with hanging lamps of brass or gold, heated with braziers of exquisite design, and perfumed by eastern gums burning in censers, the niches meant for which still remain. This imaginative transformation of the upper apartments is the most necessary of all for us to make, for only so can we enter into the life of the Alhambra during those brief Spanish winters, when there was less of western warfare and more of eastern delight. Oriental carpets of a luxury undreamed of were brought from Persia and Damascus to cover the marble floors, and, though the visitor to-day sees only the bareness proper to the open-air life of summer, we may be sure that the short days in these halls of splendour were no less idyllic than the long.

When one has peopled the courts and halls of the palace thus, it is but a step to re-create the figures of legend and song who have inhabited it, and inhabit it still. How easily can we picture the subterranean hall beneath the Gate of Justice, whence on summer nights are said to proceed the faintest sounds of music! There the immortal astrologer rests upon his divan, and beside him sits the Gothic princess, whom centuries ago he wrested from King Aben-Habuz, and who holds him in perpetual slumber with the strains of her

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silver lyre. The kingdom of Granada has fallen, but not yet has the hand grasped the key, and until this comes to pass, and the charm of the Alhambra hill is broken, the princess will still remain captive and in her turn will hold her captor in his supernatural sleep.

The oldest part of the Arab Palace—belonging to the eleventh or the twelfth century—is to be found in the Hall of the Mexuar, a council-chamber, which is all that now remains of what at the time of the Reconquest was itself a palace. The Moorish official known as the Mexuar, who had his headquarters here, was something of a major-domo and justiciary in one—an interesting and no doubt a powerful combination! Under Christian rule these buildings suffered greatly, and to-day nothing is left of them but the council-chamber, some fragments of a tower and gallery, and a garden, called after Machuca and recently reconstructed, which was once the *patio* of the Mexuar palace. The council-room, from the sixteenth century until a few years ago, was fitted up as a chapel. The incongruous altar, however, has happily now been removed, though the imperial crown and columns and the imperial “*Plus ultra*” are more conspicuous than the

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Arabic inscriptions and the shield of the Nasarite dynasty. The first ruler of this line, Mohammed I, who ascended the throne in 1232, merits remembrance as having transferred the royal residence from the Albaicín, where it had always been, to the Alhambra, where it remained.

Beyond the Mexuar Hall was the original chapel of the palace, and this—the Mosala or Almosela—still survives. Its most interesting feature is the tiny *mihrâb*, or prayer-room, in the south-east corner, so small that no more than six or eight persons can remain in it at once, even by standing upright. Next to the Mosala is the Cuarto Dorado, or Golden Chamber, with its heavy black and gold roof: this can only be reached, however, by way of the light and spacious *patio* which now unites the remains of the oldest part of the Arab Palace with those of the second palace, added to it some two hundred years later.

This was the Seraglio, or residence of the Emir, which for obvious reasons was in a part of the buildings not easily accessible. To it belonged most probably the Cuarto Dorado, the Hall and Tower of Comares and the Court of the Myrtles—to many, perhaps, when all is said, the most attractive parts of the Alhambra.

The beauty of the Comares Hall—called also



ENTRANCE TO THE HALL OF THE AMBASSADORS

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the Hall of the Ambassadors—lies largely to-day in the impression which it conveys of breadth and height, and in the magnificent view from the graceful *ajimeces* round three of its sides, over the Darro valley, the Albaicín, and the far cactus-clad slopes, studded here and there with tiny houses leading up to the deserted grassy hills. From such a height the noise of life in a Spanish town can only be heard as the faintest of murmurs, comparable to the purling waters of the Alameda and blending with the actual sound of such waters in a vague and unknown distance. We can look down into the *patios* and *cármenes* which diversify the brown and white houses with their patches and points of green—oases in a Sahara of habitations. We can pick out each of the square-towered Albaicín churches, trace the ancient fortifications, follow the paths which lead up to them, return to the valley below and watch the Golden River—for there is gold still in its sands—running down through woods and gardens to the city.

To these very windows, ere the capitulation of Granada was determined upon, Boabdil's dauntless mother led him that he might look upon the fairness of the scene which, if he should let it pass into the enemy's hands, he would be forced

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to leave for ever. In the dungeons below the hall he and she had been confined, years before, by the timorous Muley, when rumour first whispered that Boabdil might head an insurrection against him. He had escaped execution, indeed, only by the daring of his mother, who lowered him with a rope of scarves and shawls at dead of night into the valley, where horsemen were waiting to bear him away into the hills. Now Aixa reminded him of that flight, as she showed him the scene of his escape, and the prosperous city and plain of which her intrepidity had made him lord. "See what thou wouldst surrender," she cried to him, "and remember that all thine ancestors died rulers thereof, and with thee, if thou betrayest it, will end its history."

Not many weeks before, the king had taken leave of his mother and wife in one of the ante-rooms of this same tower as he left the Alhambra to make one last desperate attack upon Fernando's ravaging army. Despite the valour and skill of the Moorish hero Muza, it had failed, and four months later the Hall of the Ambassadors witnessed that Council at which the decision was taken to surrender. The voice of Muza alone rang through the venerable hall, inspiring his fellow-leaders to continue the defence. "Still,"

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he urged, "we have the means to resist, and above all we have the overwhelming strength of despair. Let every man of us that lives be given a weapon, and let us charge the enemy each one, till we fall upon the points of their lances. I myself will lead the way, for I had rather see every chief and every soul in Granada perish than that any should witness her surrender."

But his defiant tones echoed through the hall in vain. Not even that smiling prospect below could draw a murmur of support from a council of men utterly crushed and cowed, for they knew that if indeed the enemy was threatening them without, they had an enemy more terrible yet at their very doors—the spectre of famine.

No suggestion of these councils of despair lingers now in the great hall as it slumbers, its work well done: no memory remains of the awful deeds which it has witnessed—as on that day in 1314 when a furious mob from the city below invaded the royal palace, overcame the guards at the doors, forced Mohammed III, seated there in council, to abdicate from his throne, and murdered his *wacil* Abu-Abdallah-el-Lachmi before his eyes. But to those who linger and reflect in that hall, as marvellous for its almost unearthly loveliness as for its strength, some

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suggestion of its history may be conveyed. How securely the enormous thickness of these walls would imprison the cries of Christian captives who were immured in the dungeons beneath! Yet how exquisitely the graceful windows, the luxuriously chased roof and the richly decorated walls would adorn the Sultan's court as he sat in state on his throne facing the entrance, receiving ambassadors from abroad and taking council with his nobles. Here, as perhaps nowhere else in the Alhambra, grace joins hands with strength.

From the Hall of the Ambassadors a corridor hung with pictures leads to some modern rooms in which Washington Irving lived for some time and wrote parts of his famous *Tales*. The corridor then becomes an open-air gallery and ends in a delightful little pavilion erected upon a projecting tower overhanging the Darro valley. This was built in 1536 by Charles V for his consort, and is known as the Queen's Boudoir: the Tocador—or Peinador—de la Reina. To sit there, or to walk around the outer gallery, gives one a delightful sensation of being perched in some eyry, far from the ground below, and the birds which alight fearlessly on the ledges and fly in and out of the open windows encourage the illusion.

There is a fine view from the Boudoir, not only

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of the valley and the Albaicín, but of the Generalife and some of the Alhambra towers. Still more attractive to the imagination is the subterranean staircase at the foot of the tower on which the Boudoir stands. Strange to say, it has never been properly investigated. "It is said"—and we shall do well to inquire no further, lest our illusions be destroyed—"it is said" that it goes down as far as the banks of the Darro. That certainly must have been its *raison d'être*—and how many stories can we not weave round such an authentic instrument of mystery as a barely-discovered, unexplored staircase beneath ground so rich in history and legend as that of the Alhambra!

Let us return, however, from the Boudoir to the Hall of the Ambassadors, leaving the "Emperor's apartments" (as these modern rooms are called) behind us, and pass to the Sala de la Barca, which is generally supposed to have been named from the boat-like shape of its roof. But may it not equally well have been the Hall of the Alberca, for there, beyond it, in the sunshine, gleams the brilliant Court of the Myrtles, and there we may well return again and again, choosing preferably the early morning before it is thronged with tourists. The entire court is

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marble-paved, with arcades on the shorter sides. As we look back from the far arcade, the Comares Hall can be seen, with two of its graceful windows, and a prospect of green beyond. Above the arcade is a gaily-tiled dome and roof, and, in the background, the sturdy Comares tower. The Myrtle Court, it will be noticed, is a delicate compliment paid by the Mohammedans to their religion, for the placid water of the myrtle-fringed *alberca* symbolises that part of the mosque in which the worshippers perform their ablutions before divine service.

It is a lovely sight. No one is there to spoil it but a sleepy attendant in the shadows ; no sound can be heard but the fluttering of a flock of pigeons from the roof to the pavement. Not a soul is astir. How easily, in such silence and splendour, can we imagine this court in its Moslem days, when those fantastically pictured walls, now a dull terra-cotta, blazed and shone with every colour that art could give them. As we sit there, and our fancy re-creates the shimmering jets which played into the pond, the sun strikes them playfully, and there emerge who can say what phantoms of the past, to those who have eyes to see them !

We dream on in the sunshine. And the spell

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which the scene can wield may be judged from this—that not only is it long before we are moved to inspect the walls with their delicate traceries, but even when we do so they have little of the power to charm us that others, in themselves less beautiful, have in the courts and halls around.

III

THE GEM (*continued*)

WHERE shall we go from the Court of the Myrtles? Let us keep, for the present, to the second palace, and discover the subterranean ways, beneath the court, which lead to the Baths, a series of underground apartments dating from the fourteenth century. The Sala de las Camas, or Reclining Room, has been indifferently restored with a profusion of blue and gold, and adorned with modern inscriptions, which do not greatly help one to imagine the scene when the ladies would be reclining on the couches set in the alcoves and singers entertaining them from their gallery above.

Within, one room leads to another, each with its marble bath and star-shaped apertures cut in the thick roof, through which the light enters fitfully. Once again, it is as easy to people these apartments with bathers and their attendants as to restore in imagination the colours long vanished from the walls, to re-create the subtle perfumes and the heavy

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vapours, and to catch the hum of animated talk and the strains of music in the reclining room beyond. But the *azulejos* telling of Charles V's ambitions are everywhere: we are never allowed to forget him.

Two *patios*, on the same low level as the baths, draw crowds of visitors, as much, perhaps, for the attraction of the contrast between them as for their beauty. Both are posterior to the Reconquest. The Patio de la Reja is named from the railings of its gallery: it is simple and small, but four tall cypresses, which, with a fountain, are all its adornment, lend it dignity, and in the dusk a certain gloom. Beyond it is the larger and lovelier garden called after the mystical Lindaraja, a Moorish beauty who vanishes into thinnest air when the dictionary explains that her name is in reality that of the belvedere above the garden, and is a corruption of the words *l'ain dar aixà*, or "belvedere of the sultana's house." Still, there is the consolation that the poet is mightier than the dictionary, and none will destroy the phantom princess who captured the allegiance of Washington Irving and has inspired some typically romantic Spanish verses:

Reina Lindaraja,
por tus ojos fué
que perdí los míos
cuando te miré. . . .

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Princess Lindaraja,
'Tis thy glorious eyes
That have turned me sightless
In amazing wise.

Dawn was stealing slowly
O'er cold Alhambra's towers.
Thou wert walking softly
In thy rose-clad bowers
There, Princess, I trembled
With wonder and surprise—
Princess Lindaraja,
'Twas thy glorious eyes !

Sternly spake thy consort
With jealousy ablaze :
" Take the varlet prisoner
That on her dares to gaze."
I looked but on thy robe, then,
Yet sang with glad surprise—
But, Princess Lindaraja,
'Twas for thy glorious eyes !

Irons red-hot thrice heated
Blinded me for aye.
" Now thou shalt not see her
For ever and a day ! "
Blind, O king, thy folly,
Blinder thou than I !
Thou her love hast forfeited ;
'Tis mine until I die.



COURT OF THE LIONS AS SEEN FROM THE HALL
OF THE TWO SISTERS

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Sightless, yea, I may be
But how great my prize !
For, Princess Lindaraja,
Mine are thy glorious eyes.

A lovely pleasaunce is this, planted with orange-trees, cypresses and flowering laurel, clipt and shaped hedges of box, and flowers among which the bees make merry in the sunshine. When the large and beautiful fountain, partly Moorish, is playing, and the garden is deserted, there are few retreats more restful than its pebbled walks.

The centre of the third palace, which became the Harem, or women's quarter, is the world-famed Court of the Lions, the date of which is but a century before that of the Reconquest. By the side of the spacious Court of the Myrtles, it looks at first rather gloomy, small and mean. But this impression soon disappears when one examines it in detail. For all its smallness, it is surpassingly rich in beauty. Time has treated it gently. Around its pebbled surface runs a colonnade, consisting of a hundred and twenty-four slender columns ranged alternately in groups and singly. A large central fountain, surrounded by twelve rudely carved lions with spouts in their mouths, stands in the centre of the court, and connects with eight smaller fountains at the

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shorter sides of the patio. But the court's greatest charm is in its two square pavilions, or *templetes*, projecting into it from the centre of the shorter arcades, and supported by groups and clusters of these same graceful pillars. The eastern pavilion has also a cupola covered with *azulejos* in blue, white and green.

It is the custom to extol the Court of the Lions as seen by moonlight, which transforms it into a palace of ivory. But for my own part I like it better when the sun makes play with its colours, when from the fountains there springs liquid light, and when the tracery of the farther arches and pavilion turns to finest lace-work wrought by no human hand. How much lovelier still it must have been at the Reconquest, when, as documents tell us, the walls were ablaze with colour, court and galleries alike were paved with marble, and orange-trees loaded with blossom gave perfume as well as shade.

In the design and execution of the court, signs of decadence can be traced which betray the influence of Christian art and characterise the last years of Moorish rule. There is an excess of finesse and grace which very soon begins to cloy. One longs to lift up the entire court, lions and all, and take it home to look at and to keep. We are

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far from the more virile parts of the Alhambra, and farther than in any other part of it from the greatness of the mosque of Córdoba. Again, the Court of the Lions is peculiar in being surrounded entirely by arcades, as though it were the cloister of a religious house. The lions themselves, as a glance will show, are conventional in the extreme; note the stiffness of their attitude and the symmetrical curves of the wrinkles below their eyes: they are hardly lions at all.

Four halls, renowned in story, flank the Court of the Lions, one leading from each of its arcades. For myself I like the Hall of the Two Sisters best, with the ante-room named from its *ajimeces*, and a charming vista of the cypresses of Lindaraja's *patio* to be enjoyed from a fantastically adorned little *mirador* beyond. Two slabs of marble of exactly equal size, one on either side of its central fountain, give this hall its name. Nowhere in the entire Alhambra are there finer mosaics than round its lower walls, and even more marvellous is the honeycomb vaulting of its octagonal ceiling, if the commonplace name of ceiling can be given to the thousands of tiny cells which rise one above the other, uncountably. The intricacy and variety of the mural decorations are unbelievable till one has examined them for oneself: even pictures

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will hardly convey a charm which depends almost wholly for its effect upon sheer profuseness.

“What beauties are here for the eyes to feast upon,” says one of the Arabic inscriptions on the walls. “In this place the soul can dream of bliss.” And again: “I am the garden that daily takes on new adornment: contemplate my beauty and thou shalt observe this change.” We look into Lindaraja’s garden, though the garden that was meant is one not of flowers but of line and colour.

Only less interesting are the rectangular halls which lead from the shorter sides of the Court of the Lions. That of the Mocárabes has never recovered from a powder explosion which wrecked it one hundred years after the Reconquest, though some attempts have been made at restoration. Near this hall is a passage leading to the ruins of the Rauda, or royal chapel and pantheon; the bodies contained in it were exhumed and re-interred elsewhere at the request of Boabdil.

Opposite the Mocárabes Hall is the Hall of the Kings, or the Hall of Justice, which has a double interest. From the purely artistic standpoint it is a wonderful study in perspective, with its five sections, three of which are lit by a score of miniature windows, its threefold arcade, and forest of pillars. On the historical side, one’s

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interest is captured by the paintings on leather in the recesses, one of which seems to represent the ten Nasarite rulers of Granada in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, while others depict romantic battle-scenes. Whether these paintings are the work of Moors or of Christian captives has often been discussed and is still in doubt. Another feature of the hall is a fourteenth-century water-trough, with quaintly carved reliefs of animals and an inscription only partially legible. This, some marble slabs from the tombs of the Rauda, and the handsome vase preserved in the Hall of the Two Sisters, are the principal archæological treasures of the Alhambra.

It is often said that this Hall of the Kings was the scene of the first Mass to be celebrated in the Palace in the presence of the Catholic Monarchs, Irving, in his *Alhambra*, pictures the stately scene. placing Columbus, an insignificant and unregarded spectator, in a remote corner of the assembly. All that is actually known, however, is that, as early as 1536, and for many years afterwards, the Royal Chapel was situated at the north end of the hall.

The most celebrated of the four halls around the Lions' Court is undoubtedly the Hall of the Abencerrajes, with its fine wooden doors, alcoves

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with twin arches, pendant stalactites, delicately honeycombed ceiling and tiny high windows : through these the sunlight enters and plays on the upper walls, every inch of which is covered with stucco-work. A large twelve-sided fountain fills the centre of the hall, and the reddish stains on its marble base, believed firmly by all properly disposed persons to be of blood, recall the sinister legend for which the hall is famed the world over.

In the last days of the Moorish rule in Spain, the strife between Zegríes and Abencerrajes, two families of noble lineage and history, reached an unprecedented intensity. One day a Zegrí came with a deputation of six knights to King Boabdil, asking leave to speak with him upon a matter which affected both the private and the public weal of the royal house. "Your Majesty will remember," he began, "how that in the Generalife there was of late a *zambra* in which the greatest of our cavaliers took part. Now, on that day, this knight of the Gomeles, who stands next to me, saw the cavalier Aben-Hamet the Abencerraje, beneath a bower of roses, in dishonest intercourse with the Queen——"

"With the Queen?" cried Boabdil, aflame.

"With the Queen," returned the Zegrí, imperturbably. "So absorbed were they in their

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libidinous actions that they neither took heed of us, nor, as it appears, saw us. After a space, the Queen left the bower, and went towards the laurel garden, where her ladies awaited her.

“For a while longer we tarried. Then the treacherous Aben-Hamet came out likewise, gathering roses red and white, wherewith he fashioned a garland, setting it upon his head. We advanced and inquired of him what he did there. ‘I do but look upon this lovely bower,’ he answered, and gathered more roses, giving two to each of us, whereupon we left him. And now we that are the friends of your Majesty have come hither secretly, that the Court may not be perturbed by this scandalous deed. Look to thyself, O King, and look to the adulterer, and to thy unfaithful Queen.”

Boabdil was speechless. His rage turned to an overwhelming dismay before evidence so well attested, for the Zegrí's companions were knights well known for their rectitude. All thoughts of what he owed to the Abencerrajes, who through the fiercest civil strife had stood his friends, departed as though they had never been, and one passionate resolve took possession of him, the resolve to exterminate their line.

So he commanded the Zegríes and the Gomeles

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to assemble in the Court of the Lions, with thirty men of their clans and an executioner. Into the Hall which led from the Court they went; a message was sent to Aben-Hamet that the King desired to speak with him; and as he arrived he was instantly seized and bound, and, before he could utter a word, beheaded in the alabaster fountain. This, says the chronicler (whose veracity, however, is not entirely above suspicion) is the manner of Moorish vengeance.

Nor was that bloody act, which alone would have sufficed to name the Hall that witnessed it, sufficient to appease the jealousy of the King. Six and thirty Abencerrajes, the story goes, were summoned one by one to the chamber of death, before the news of what was happening there was carried to their companions by a page, who had entered with his master, and escaped as the great door was opened to admit another victim. To him alone is said to be due the preservation of a remnant of that line, for he sped through the palace and its environs, warning all that might receive the royal summons to disregard it as they prized their lives.

That story, so revolting when related in cold blood, circumstantially, is lightly enough repeated

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by tens of thousands who visit the Arab Palace. True, it can be listened to calmly only by those who refrain from picturing the grossness and sordidness of the men that gave it being—who shut their imagination to its details and close their minds to its reality. And herein it is typical to me of much in the palace that is told in wood and stone, in stucco, tile and mosaic, as well as in story and song. For the charm of the whole Alhambra is essentially a charm of distance. Comparatively few among the thousands who admire its fairy-like traceries examine them with any care, or desire to know more about them than what they can easily see. They are surely right.

The most lasting and treasured memories of the Arab Palace are of perspectives, as those of the Alhambra as a whole are of distant views. The imagery of arches receding in the distance, of forests of graceful columns which move as one wanders among them, calls up to the mind most easily and most readily the peculiar charm of the palace. When I think of the Court of the Lions, it is not of the Court as a whole, but of the fountain as viewed by moonlight from the Hall of the Two Sisters, or of that wonderful lace-like pavilion which leads to the Hall of the Kings

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seen at the moment of entry from the Myrtle Court. Just as the fascination of the Alhambra's history lies in the accretions of successive generations, and its legends, as the centuries go on, gather loveliness and power, so the most enduring attraction of the Arab Palace is in galleries, corridors and successions of arcades, in the play of light and shade, sunlight and moonbeam, rather than in so many square inches, however beautiful, of plaster of Paris or mosaic. And the best of it is that new wanderings bring new vistas, undiscovered joys. Hence the fallacy of the superior visitor—a not uncommon phenomenon—who dismisses the whole erection as a "stucco palace," a gaud to be looked at and thrown away, not revisited delightfully, again and again, in the imagining.

And here let us anticipate, adding that the beauty of the Alhambra as a whole is not dissimilar. From whatever part of the city or of the Vega one views it, there is always a new comparison to be made, a new aspect to be admired. Now the Alhambra is a fortress pure and simple, now a country mansion reclining amid soft green foliage. Now it is dark, bare and imposing, now a warm soft russet or a tawny brown, now it glows golden in the sunlight. Seen from one

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distant height it stands erect, from another it sleeps, from a third—undiscovered, perhaps, for years—it starts out of its sleep like a giant suddenly awakened, even as old Muley started from his couch when he learned of his son's rebellion. You never know the Alhambra less than when you have ticked off every part of it in the guide-book. Better far to know it only in imagination, or to dream of it from the terrace of San Nicolás and never to enter its gates.

Last memory of all—again a memory of distant views—is the ever-present one of those enchanting vistas from windows, roofs and balconies : of Lindaraja's cypresses from the Hall of the Abencerrajes ; of the myrtle-fringed Alberca from the Comares Hall ; of beauties yet to be described from the towers which surround the palace. And from all sides, there are the vistas of the city, framed in those Moorish windows which themselves compel the gaze : of the *chumbera*-clad, cave-riddled hills from the Cuarto Dorado, of the dignified yet unpretentious Generalife from the Queen's Boudoir, of the precipitous wooded gorge below that same Boudoir and the restful sea of grey and white houses spread out beyond, of almost everything that is to be seen from the Alhambra—and that is saying

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much—from the nine great windows of the Hall of the Ambassadors: the view of views, having that one great essential of the prospect glorious—namely, that it is never twice the same.



“TELLING THE TOWERS”

IV

TELLING THE TOWERS

WALK about Zion," said the Hebrew poet, "Tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks." The six and thirty Alhambra towers are too often neglected, though they have their tales to tell, both of history and legend. The tower called after the Gate of Justice we have already seen: a few of the remaining ones we must glance at even in a cursory visit.

Before ever we enter the Alhambra precincts by the Gate of the Pomegranates, a rugged mass arrests our attention on the other side of the Alameda from the Palace. This is a fortification known as the Torres Bermejas or Vermilion Towers. It is quite distinct from the Alhambra, and much anterior to it in date: it may indeed have been established before the times of the Romans. At the Moorish invasion of 712 it was found to be occupied by a garrison defending a Jewish colony which had existed for some five

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hundred years below it, on the right bank of the Genil. Such a monument of antiquity can hardly be omitted from a survey of the Alhambra towers : by comparison with it they are almost modern.

To a group of the best known of them, there is a separate entrance, past the Palace of Charles V, and the Church of Santa María. A broad path, bordered with acacia-trees and planted with blue iris, leads through grounds which look like deserted fields ; and a desolate enough walk, in its early stages, it is. Here a tower has fallen into ruin irretrievably : there, another one has been turned into a ramshackle cottage. And those dilapidated buildings to the left are all that remains of the oldest convent in Granada, San Francisco, built the year after the Reconquest, and for some years honoured by being the burial place of Fernando and Isabel.

Opposite it, on the right, is another apparent ruin, the size of which we hardly realise till we walk across the field and examine it from the lower ground beyond. When, behold ! It is the famous Siete Suelos—the Seven-Storied Tower—in the unfathomed vaults of which there is reputed to be hidden a treasure of stupendous worth. Insignificant it may seem before we approach it, but it is picturesque and imposing

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enough from below, or from the main road just beyond the point where we are standing. And the traveller with imagination, looking up to it, will find that it has lost none of its power to impress. Two of its vaults he may descend, and taste their dankness and clammy horror. And he will easily understand the stories that have grown up around it—how the treasure is hidden beneath the lowest of the subterranean floors, and guarded, according to some, by an Ethiopian of frightful aspect, or by an army of phantom Moors which bars the progress of any who descend below the second vault. How strange noises are heard beneath the ground by night, and how there emerges from the depths a Headless Horse, and an unknown monster called *El Belludo*, followed by a company of invisible beasts, only the trampling of their hoofs betraying their presence.

As I stand in the lower vault, I can well understand a child's credulity when such stories are repeated. No doubt the tower got its sinister name in Moorish times, when armies marched out to battle through its gate, so often to return with grievous losses, or from the terrible crime committed in 1599 by a deputy-governor of the Alhambra, who murdered his wife and two

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children there and flung their bodies into the vaults. But that no one has ever penetrated below the second vault is true enough, and no fable, though the least startling popular explanation, may differ greatly from the matter-of-fact one, namely, that there are no vaults below to penetrate.

It was the gate of this bastion of Siete Suelos which Boabdil in his misery begged the Conquerors to seal up so that none should ever pass through it after he himself had made his final exit by it from the city. But again, the destroying hand of history has been at work even on this best-believed of all the Alhambra legends, for it is credibly asserted that it was only closed in 1747, and even that Boabdil departed by quite another route, retiring from the Alhambra to his stronghold, the Albaicín, before leaving Granada for ever.

One fact which we do know is that the ruin of what was once among the first towers of the Alhambra is attributable to the French invaders, who blew it up to the best of their ability on evacuating Granada in the year 1812.

Beyond this gate there is only the Torre del Agua, or Water Tower, at the very end of the Upper Alhambra, which contains the reservoirs

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now in use. We turn back, then, along the line of fortifications, taking this time the right-hand path which leads towards the Arab Palace. Below us is the road named, after Boabdil, Cuesta del Rey Chico, and, rising from it, the hill on which stands the Generalife. The two towers we now reach are both famous in legend, as indeed they deserve to be, for they are the loveliest of all.

The Tower of the Princesses (Torre de las Infantas) is bare enough from without, but, like the king's daughter in the Psalms, all glorious within. It is surely unsurpassed, and I sometimes think unapproached, in the entire Alhambra. Nothing can be more graceful than its *ajimeces*, nor more inviting than its alcoves. It must have been about the last important addition in Moorish times, and its extreme ornateness may not please all alike. But he would be a *blasé* tourist indeed who could resist the beauty of the views over the country through those fairy-like twin windows—so lovely a glimpse of nature it is, set in a frame of so luxuriant an art.

One of Irving's happiest inspirations was the use of this framework for his exquisite story of the three daughters of Mohammed the Left-Handed. The two eldest flee from the Alhambra with two Christian knights imprisoned in the

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Torres Bermejas, but the youngest, Zorahaida, who is of a gentle, timid disposition, shrinks from escaping with them, though her cavalier also is awaiting her, and the mother of all three princesses had been a Christian. She has lived with perfect content in her silken chamber—like a bird in a cage, it is true, but like a happy one. In its loveliness there is also strength and protection, and though her foot is on the ladder, she fears to take the step that will cut her off from the past. So the sisters escape, and Zorahaida sinks back into her cage, to live and to die there, and to be buried in a vault beneath its tower.

Overlooking the central chamber and its fountain runs a gallery in which the lover of perspective can find perpetual enjoyment. Above the gallery is an octagonal turret lighted by sixteen windows as in the Hall of the Two Sisters. A typically Moorish staircase leads higher still, to the flat roof of the tower whence the view is a thing not soon to be forgotten. On a still night the listener may be forgiven if he seems to hear, from below, the notes of Zorahaida's silver lute, or even to see her as she roams over the battlements. For this the story credits her with doing, though according to Irving's version her troubled spirit appeared in mortal guise only at the fountain

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within the Tower, because of her remorse at having lacked the courage to flee into the Christian dominions. On one night, in the days of Philip V, she appeared thus to a child called Jacinta, who at her own request baptized her in due form, whereupon she vanished from sight for ever, leaving only as a proof of her reality the silver lute.

Near the Tower of the Princesses is the Tower of the Captive Maiden (*Torre de la Cautiva*), which belongs to the second epoch of the Alhambra and some fifty years ago was restored. Tradition makes it the prison of Isabel de Solís, a Christian girl captured by the Moors in a foray, who won the affections of King Muley, so that he afterwards repudiated his consort, Boabdil's mother, in order to raise his Spanish captive to the highest rank. Isabel, making a virtue of necessity, was persuaded into conversion, and was given the name of Zoraya. Her power over the infatuated monarch was boundless.

Una mirada de sus negros ojos
más que un alcázar para el Rey valía,

writes José Zorrilla :

One steadfast look from those black, flashing eyes
Was worth a castle to the love-sick King.

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Were but the touch of her red lips the prize,
A frontier town to Christendom he'd fling.
To grant his love her smallest, pettiest whim
The noblest head would sacrificèd be.
No price, no limit had her love to him :
One only had his heart—Zoraya she.

Memorable is the first glimpse of the great square hall of the Captive's Tower, as one emerges from the short, bare passage into the picturesque anteroom which leads to it. The three arches above the entrance recall the Myrtle Court, and both the exquisite tracery of the walls and the fine wooden ceiling are reminiscent of the Arab Palace. It would be hard, however, even there, to match the graceful alcoves which open on three sides of this main hall, with their twin balconies and niches for flowers or perfumes.

The remaining towers have less interest. The Torre de los Picos, (near the tiny fourteenth-century mosque) so called from the shape of its battlements, is no palace masquerading as a fortress, but a real tower, square, massive and dark, with the familiar slits for windows, and but little adornment. The Torre de las Damas, on the other hand, impressive enough from below, hardly seems from above to be a tower at all : it consists of a single chamber, overhanging the valley, with

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one large window and two small ones on each of its sides, and five smaller windows above. It has had a chequered history, for it was actually sold to a German purchaser in 1828, and greatly modified in detail; it remained private property till 1891, when it was again acquired for the Alhambra and some years afterwards was restored.

The terrace garden of El Partal (as this tower was originally called) which overlooks it, with a spacious pond recalling the Myrtle Court, is a recent and worthy addition to the beauties of the Alhambra. It rises in three terraces, and on the highest of these is built a small square pavilion overlooking the whole scene. No expense has been spared to suggest an oriental profusion of flowers. From a tiny pool rises an island of tall white lilies. Trellised roses lead from terrace to terrace. Cypressess planted in a line down either of the far sides of the garden supply a motif familiar to all who know Granada. Carnations in abundance remind us that we are still in Andalusia. And, as though a sufficient wealth of bloom could not be crowded into the beds, pots filled with flowers of unusual size and beauty are placed all around. It is indeed a garden of delight.

Yet I confess that for me it seems rather to

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accentuate the sadness which lingers here and there about Granada, presenting itself suddenly when one least expects it. It is "framework which waits for a picture to frame," and the imagination is less potent here than in the magic halls of Mohammed and Yusuf.

What of the leafage, what of the flower ?
Roses embowering with nought they embower !

Wanting is—what ?
Summer redundant,
Blueness abundant,
—Where is the blot ?

These are the principal towers to be seen on the east side of the Arab Palace. To the west side, however, the old citadel, or Alcazaba, with its commanding position over the Darro valley, well merits a visit. It is the oldest part of the Alhambra, a house of defence set very high, with an almost sheer drop on three of its four sides, and on the fourth the buildings it protects. No one can tell its age ; some believe that the original fortifications on so ideal a site were Roman or Visigothic, and we know for certain that a Moorish castle existed here as long ago as 857. Mohammed I, when he moved his royal residence to the Alhambra, found the Alcazaba invaluable, and made

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granaries, cisterns, baths, barracks and stables there as well as dwellings, so that its defenders were self-supporting, or nearly so.

No legends cling to this citadel. It was built to be used : its use is over. With one exception, hardly any of its half-score of towers—the Torre Quebrada, Torre del Homenaje and the rest—are ever visited. A single glance suffices to take in the surviving walls and foundations of small-roomed dwellings. Its once important Plaza de Armas receives hardly that glance. One consolation the Alcazaba has : it has at least been allowed to suffer respectable neglect, to rest in decent ruin. No “modifications,” “restorations” or “reconstructions,” since a century after the Reconquest, have disfigured it. And, in modern times, out of its strength has issued sweetness : its southern terrace is laid out in gardens, planted with jasmine, arum lilies and the sweet-scented stock ; its walls—even some of its towers—are covered with ivy and rambler roses ; and with palm and cypress it does its best to make us forget its history.

In that garden one may wander till the sun sinks low, and, ere it sets, mount the last tower of all, the famous watch-tower or Torre de la Vela, where, on the “Day of the Taking,” the first Archbishop of Granada planted the great silver

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cross, and the pennon of St. James, Patron of Spain; while the Catholic Monarchs, waiting for this moment in the Vega below, fell on their knees, as the Royal standard was hoisted also, and the Christian host cried "Santiago! Santiago! Fernando and Isabel!" Something of the spirit of that rejoicing infects the Vega on the morning of the "Saturday of Glory" (Easter Eve), when the bells ring, shots are fired and sounds of rejoicing are heard in the city and all the villages around. Yet it seems to occur to nobody to come to the Torre de la Vela then.

It is on the anniversary of the "Day of the Taking" that the girls of the province flock there, to ring the great twelve-ton bell and thus secure for themselves husbands—so they hope—within the year. But our purpose in coming to the Tower is neither to ring the bell, nor to hear it rung (as one may do at intervals through the night from Angelus to dawn), but rather to gaze at sunset upon one of the fairest landscapes of Spain.

The purple or soft green of the Alameda elms, according as it is winter or summer, lies beneath us, bathed by the sun, ere it departs, in purest gold. Gilded, too, are the olive-clad hills and the soft, distant slopes. The sky pales, the countryside grows dim, the western mountains deepen to their



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nightly purple, while in the east the soft snow of the Sierra and its roughly-hewn foot-hills take on an array of colours so transient that each seems to chase the other across the canvas. Crimson, grey-blue, green and gold : we strive in vain to follow the transmutations of the Master-Alchemist. Then the rosy eastern clouds turn our glance again to westward, and behold ! the sun has disappeared with his crown of gold behind the now leaden-hued hills, while above them hangs a huge bank of cloud of rose and crimson.

V

THE GENERALIFE AND BEYOND

A CITY of *cármenes*." So Granada has been called, and not untruly. The word *carmen* is derived from an Arabic word meaning "vine," and the reality, when described in matter-of-fact English, is not very much more attractive than that bald grammar-book statement. A *carmen* is merely a house set in a garden ! But *what* a house, and *what* a garden ! A house to dream of, and a garden to live one's life in. A *casa de recreo*, quite removed from the business of every day. A *soledad* to retire to, and to remain in at will, unperturbed by so much as the sound of the world without. A garden, a lovesome thing, vine-trellised, wooded and fragrant, with plashing fountain and perpetual shade, flowers and fruit the year through, and a prospect of the mountains from pergola of wistaria and roses. It is of these that Granada is a city, and when the Granadine abroad hears the word *carmen*, his pulse for a moment will

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quicken and his eyes grow bright as images of home pass before them.

The *carmen* being a feature of Granada, it is only natural that the Moorish kings should have had one like any lesser folk, and that it should be the loveliest of all that are to be found in the city. That is the explanation of those white walls, arches and towers, with their cypress background, on the hillside above the Alhambra. The Generalife,¹ commonly described as the "summer residence" of the Moorish sovereigns, was essentially a garden, with a very few necessary buildings (greatly added to in later times), to which a king and his ladies could easily pass from their palace, to spend hours or days as they desired.

To visit this *carmen*, to-day, one has to leave the Alhambra, climb to the far end of the Alameda, pass the Washington Irving Hotel, and mount a short but steep slope, before coming upon the gate which admits to a path running back in the direction one came from and leading to the long and handsome cypress avenue which forms an attractive but quite modern approach. All this

¹ Tourists commonly disagree as to whether it should be pronounced as Henry Liffey or as General Life. Wise tourists listen to the native before they try.

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entirely spoils the effect of the Generalife upon those who have never before seen it. Happily, in recent years, excavations and restorations are giving it back some of its character. The visitor, as he enters, now finds before him a terraced garden-court, from the left of which the Alhambra is seen to be quite near, and the lie of the old path from the Cuesta del Rey Chico can easily be traced. Descending in this direction, he can reconstruct the entry of a prince of the Alhambra, for there, in front of him, are the niches for the sentries, the small outer court of approach, and the necessary seats for rest in the dog-days of a Spanish summer. Now that he has gone back through the centuries and approached the Generalife as it was approached by the Moors, he may mount the steps again and pass through the garden-court to the one part of the *carmen* which everybody knows—the Court of the Canal or Acequia.

It is an attractive combination of restfulness and beauty. Beyond the arches before which you stand is a long rectangular garden, bisected by a canal running lengthwise, with a fountain at either end, and through the farther arches a prospect of blue hills in the distance. Clipt myrtle hedges, stately laurels, and orange-trees

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in flower or fruit have distinguished the garden for centuries. To the right, a wall is hidden by a wealth of climbing roses, to the left runs an arcade which gives a satisfying view of the Alhambra surrounded by olive groves and fertile orchards, with glimpses of the city to the right. At intervals along the canal play jets of water, meeting so as to form a royal arch, the effect of which is intensified by two rows of newly planted cypresses.

The buildings of the Generalife, as befits those of a *carmen*, are hardly attractive enough to rob the gardens of a moment of one's time. The careful observer will find traces of a moat, dating from the days when there was a fortress on the site, and of a series of three outer walls, for fortifications were as necessary here, in Moorish times, as in the Alhambra Palace. Neither the disused chapel—once a simple *mirador*—of the Acequia court, nor the rooms and corridors at the far end of that court, are of any great interest. All these farther apartments, except the first room one enters, were erected after the Reconquest: the only charm they can offer belongs of right to the superb view which is commanded by their upper gallery, surpassing even that from the Hall of the Ambassadors, both on account of its greater

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extensiveness and the inclusion of the Alhambra itself in the panorama.

From these rooms one passes to the upper gardens of the Generalife, through the Court of the Cypresses, a high-walled *patio* or water garden, full of wallflowers and violets in winter, with an ample pond dotted with islets and shaded by the trees which give it its name. The massive one on the eastern side is the six-century-old Cypress of the Sultana, beneath which Boabdil's consort is reputed to have met the Abencerraje, for tradition has changed the rose-bower of the chronicle to the shade of a cypress, thinking this perhaps a place more meet for amours which ended in death.

From this *patio* flights of steps lead up to the terraced gardens which are the glory of the Generalife. Paved with pebbles in intricate mosaic-like patterns, planted with magnolias, laurels and fig-trees, and with cypresses quaintly shaped to form columns, walls and pavilions, bordered with low hedges of myrtle and box cut in triangular and octagonal forms, studded with fountains which play in summer, decked with chrysanthemums in autumn, and roses, red and yellow, which run riot in early spring, the place is a paradise for the imagination. Cunningly

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hidden little flights of steps lead to undiscovered terraces, gay with more flowers, while from the highest terrace, near the disused belvedere-tower, another series of steps leads downwards, with a small fountain and an octagonal terrace at the foot of each of its flights, to a balcony overlooking the Cypress Patio on the side and the valley of the Darro on the other.

One can dream away hours and days in these gardens. In such an environment the perfect Prince Ahmed of the legend may well have lived, immured by a prudent father within its high walls lest he should fulfil his destiny and run into grievous peril by learning the significance of love. But the father can have had little idea of the beauty of his own gardens if he thought that such knowledge could be hidden from a sensitive youth in places where not only do the birds sing their love-songs all the day but the very flowers seem to be lovers, so closely do they grow, so tenderly are they intertwined and so lavishly do they shower their perfume. Nor are the upper gardens the only ones for the fancy to run wild in. Below the Acequia Court there are hidden bowers and solitary walks where few learn to stray, not far from the subterranean prisons in which Christian captives once repined. One of these, a little

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square garden, with its central fountain, overlooked by the northern rooms, is a study in red roses and bushes of that white spring flower which has the appropriate local name of *guirnalda* (garland)—appropriate because at its best it completely covers its foliage in a mass of white. Often, for hours at a time, there is perfect silence in this spot—or a silence which makes music to the rippling of an invisible stream—or a silence again, broken by the gentle flapping of wings, as Prince Ahmed's own white dove flies out from the *mirador* above our heads, seeking consolation for the sorrowing master who in his sadness has given it liberty.

I often regret the lack of time which seems to harass the English-speaking visitor to Granada. Not only because, until he has dreamed in it as well as looked at it, he can hardly be said to know the Alhambra at all, but also for the other sights which he misses in the city and the country around. Of some of these the chapters which follow will tell: but what I could most desire that my hurried tourist should see is the country beyond the Generalife. He is so near it—on the very road to it!—and he has only to turn up the hill to the left when he comes out of the Generalife

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entrance gates instead of taking the path to the right and returning to his hotel.

It is undiscovered country, that Beyond. The Cemetery road, the peasants call it, perhaps to dissuade you from going along it. "For my part," says little Pilar—that dark-eyed child with scarlet poppies twined in her hair who lives at the Venta just above, "for my part, I cannot think how the *señores* can walk there so often! It gives me fear!" She shudders. And her mother shudders. And all good Spaniards shudder. It is so gloomy! *¡Da miedo!* It gives us fear!

Yet, in spite of my little friend Pilar, I walk over the hills above the Generalife more frequently than anywhere else in the province of Granada. It is a paradise of light and colour. The almost steely hue of the well-drilled rows of olive trees contrasts so strangely in the blinding sunlight—so uncannily, Pilar might say—with the rich, red earth, and this in its turn is a foil to the soft green of the grass growing among the trees in patches. Away to the left, that path leads upward through the olive groves to a height termed the Silla del Moro. And that is only the beginning of its course. When it has passed the slopes made golden with buttercups and the fragrant musk orchis, still it winds upwards, over grassy meadows

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and sun-baked hills, merry with the humming of the bees among the lavender, and swept clean by the northern breeze. At last, away beyond an oasis of shade formed by a cluster of acacias, it reaches a ridge, all pink and white with cistus and mountain rose, looking down upon the long steep hillside and the winding course of the Darro. All around are more hills, with the unescapable Sierra above them, and I doubt not that we could roam for days among the close-cropped grass and shrub, the scented thyme, and the tulips of maroon and white that announce the high season of spring.

For those who keep to the Cemetery road, the view is no less lovely. A hundred yards to the right, off the beaten path, and we are on the crest of a ridge, with all Granada—or so it seems—below us. Around are meadows hedged with cactus and planted with silver olives, in the background the trees of a walled garden, and on the right hand a wilderness of the succulent prickly pear, the fruit of which bears the delightfully appropriate name of *chumbo*. Behind the trees can just be discerned two of the Alhambra towers. Far below all this, caught in the cleft of the valley, lies the sun-bathed city of Granada, its proud cathedral rising boldly amidst the grey

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and white houses. Then, the spacious Vega, dotted with villages, and a patchwork in greens, from jade to emerald, and sober browns—rather like a Nature's chess board—stretching as far as the grey mountains that vaguely and unevenly bound it. Away to the left, yet apparently so near that it seems one could touch it, the snowy Sierra with its sugar-loaf peaks clear-cut against an azure sky. Below it, the sunlit Genil, winding its way towards the city.

When I build a house in Granada, I shall build it somewhere near this paradise. A little white cottage on the hillside it will be, with a path hedged by *chumbera* and soft, grey aloes. White almond-bloom will deck my garden in winter, and olives of grey and silver all the year round. That garden will be bright with butterflies by day and echoing with the cricket's song at night-time. Never do I hear the cricket but I think of it, never smell the perfume of charred wood, never feel the cool wind blowing off snow, but my mind goes back (or forward) to it unfailingly.

All day and every day this cottage of my dreams has a charm that is all its own. In summer it sparkles and shines from early morning till the sun goes down behind it in a blaze of gold; till on the Vega, wrapt in its bluish haze, there

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suddenly falls the dusk, and here and there appear twinkling lights like ships on the darkening sea. No less attractive are the gleam and gloom of a cloudy day, when bursts of sun light up patches of green meadow and a solitary cluster of white houses.

When the wind howls in the mountains, and the Vega is covered in dense grey mist, my little white house, like a ship becalmed at sea, is outlined against it still. And on the rare days of storm and rain, when the sky is dark save for one narrow rim of light that circles the horizon, then the sun will shoot a single ray through the clouds, and pick out my cottage in purest white. Now, once upon a time, that would have been thought supernatural.

Do you share the fears of our little Pilar, sitting below there in the sunshine on the poppy-covered hillside? Does it seem to you too lonely up here? Does the silence fail to speak to you, and the far-off Vega bell suggest the cemetery walls, so unearthly in the light of the moon. To me that is but an attraction more.

For the Cemetery is a beautiful and peaceful spot—set far above the din and tumult of the city. Let us pay it a visit ere we descend. No sooner do we enter than a tiny garden, filled with the

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flowers we know at home—pansies, forget-me-nots and daisies—gives us welcome. Within are two large *patios*, bounded by walls with niches and vaults in which rest the dead. Each court, with its large modern tombs, is crossed by walks bordered with fir and cypress, but not entirely given over to gloom, for here and there grow bushes of purple lilac, and roses which are a mass of luxuriance and colour. The main path mounts to the little chapel, through scores of humbler graves on either side, with iris, purple and white, growing freely in the tall grass among them, and birds singing all the day long. And as one reaches the chapel, emerging from the cypress' shade, there appears in the distance a vision of the snow-crowned hills, leading the mind from everlasting to Everlasting.

VI

THE CATHEDRAL AND THE CHURCHES

AMONG the exploits which lent distinction to the last campaign of the Christians before Granada, none is remembered and repeated with more zest than that of Hernán Pérez del Pulgar. A certain Moorish knight named Tarfe had outraged Spanish chivalry by riding to the boundary of the Christian camp and hurling into the ground near the royal pavilion a lance bearing an insulting message addressed to the Queen. Pérez del Pulgar took up the implied challenge, and, choosing a band of warriors as intrepid as himself, invaded Granada at night time by a secret entrance, passing along the vaulted channel of the Darro, and succeeded in nailing to the door of the principal mosque, with his poniard, a parchment scroll bearing the words *Ave Maria*.

Little more than a year after this daring deed, Granada was conquered, and Hernando de Talavera, Bishop of Avila, who had accompanied the

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royal troops, was appointed to the newly created archbishopric. At once the mosque which had been the first to bear a Christian legend was purified and assigned to the city as a Cathedral. But what Charles V said later about the burial-place of the Catholic Monarchs—"too small for glory so great"—was speedily said of this mosque, and on Lady Day 1523 there began the erection, near by, of a Cathedral Church which should be worthy of the Reconquest, of which it would serve as the perpetual monument. In the four centuries and more which have passed since then, many changes have taken place on the site. The Cathedral was to have been built in the Gothic style, like that of Toledo. But when the work was but two years old, it was made over to the great Burgalese, Diego de Siloe, and the Cathedral, continued as a Renaissance building, was consecrated in 1561, two years before his death. The end of the sixteenth century saw the building of the tower; in the seventeenth, Alonso Cano was mainly responsible for the West façade. The interior was not completed and paved till a hundred years later. Meanwhile the Chapel Royal had been erected and enlarged *pari passu* with the building of the Cathedral, and adjoining it, and for the mosque of Pulgar's achievement had

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been substituted an eighteenth century Sagrario, which is now used as a parish church, and contains a chapel commemorating the famous exploit.

Opinions differ about the merit and beauty of the Cathedral Church of Granada. As Renaissance Cathedrals go, it is undoubtedly a dignified and impressive building: finely proportioned, nobly adorned. But it is so much unlike the finest cathedrals of Spain—not only in its strange mixture of styles, but also in its detail—that one may be forgiven for finding difficulty in assimilating its spirit at once. Can it really be that there is too much of reconquest in the Cathedral and too little of devotion?

This may be but a stranger's impression, which closer acquaintance will dispel. One of my most lasting recollections of the Cathedral is of the three carved lions under each pulpit, of a little child sitting contentedly astride one of them and two others curled up, with their arms around each other, in the space between two. Yet even with that recollection comes another—of passing from the Cathedral, deserted and dead, to the Sagrario, of the violet rays from its high windows shedding a vague and dazzling light upon its altars, pavement and thronged worshippers—a score of persons, at the least, for every one to be

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found in the Cathedral. And that is an everyday experience, and speaks for itself.

But there are days when the Cathedral comes into its own, and one of them is Maundy Thursday. That day is the one vivid flash of thanksgiving, light and joy in the darkness and mourning of Holy Week. The white-and-gold so characteristic of the sanctuary is reflected in the white and gold vestments of the throng of clergy, from Cardinal-Archbishop to subdeacon, which almost fill it. The crash of the organ and the pealing of the bells at the Gloria give the right note to the day. The procession of the Holy Oils, small as it is, swells into significance as the voices of the cantors echo through the naves. Best of all is the final procession after Mass, when, to the familiar strains of "Pange Lingua," and preceded by the civic representatives and all the clergy, the archbishop, under his baldaquin with its tinkling bells, bears the Host round the ambulatory and back to the High Altar, the circular galleries above which are illuminated by hundreds of candles. Meanwhile, in the Sagrario, decked with evergreens, candles and fragrant flowers, is being sung the parish Mass of the day, and here, too, organ and bells are heard once more before the silence of Good Friday.

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The Cathedral still keeps its dignity when *Tenebrae* is sung, the altars are stripped and left bare, and night shrouds them in darkness. For the Sanctissimum is reserved on the High Altar (not, as at Seville and elsewhere, in a "monument"), to which both distance and dusk lend beauty, while the tall candles, in the lofty galleries of the dome, guarding the Most Holy like rows of motionless soldiers, deepen the impression of solemnity. Not so in the Sagrario, and some of the parish churches, where the beauty and simplicity of candle-light have been spoilt by the introduction of rows of electric bulbs, and where an image of the Child Jesus, not always in perfect taste, is set before the Altar of Repose so as to face it. Another church boasts a representation of the heavens, complete with angels' heads, the whole flooded with a light which is anything but supernatural. One fights one's way through the crowds of women in black mantillas who on that Thursday afternoon visit the "monuments," to come back to the dignity of the darkening and empty Cathedral with relief. It is significant that in Granada two soldiers in full dress uniform stand at the door of each church to keep order.

For services like the Mass of the Presanctified on Good Friday the Cathedral is by no means

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suitable. That service can be moving beyond description in a darkened church, when simplicity and severity combine to preach Christ crucified. But here it is celebrated at the altar of the *trascoro*, an eighteenth-century rococo perpetration of the baser sort : a worse place could hardly have been chosen.¹ The red of the *retablo* and its four alabaster statues stand out horribly. Sunlight streams in at the windows, and marble pavement and tall white pillars reflect it. There is no sense of loss or heaviness ; the kneeling figures of black-robed clergy and laity, all in mourning, are swallowed up in the light. There is no choir, the Reproaches being sung by four cantors. The least inharmonious moment, perhaps, is that of the procession from the High Altar, when the voices of the cantors soar aloft in the *Vexilla Regis*, and we forget for an instant that it is Good Friday.

A sensitive observer, during Holy Week, might remark upon the city as upon the Cathedral. Attempts are made, during the *duelo*, to stop traffic in the principal streets, but there is little of the hush of Seville. The processions which,

¹ The Dean tells me that the Archbishop is anxious to transfer this service to a side-chapel, but that it should ever have been possible to hold it here is extraordinary.

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perhaps from mixed motives, are being given considerable importance in Granada are on the whole well ordered and reasonably impressive ; but it was a shock, two Easters ago, to see swing-boats going merrily in the Puerta Real while the Good Friday procession passed. Essentially, there is an air of paganism about Granada, which, to me at least, enhances its essential note of sadness.

More suited to the Cathedral than the rites of Good Friday are those of Easter, when pictures and statues are unveiled, and the organ joins in the chorus of praise, at first timidly, lending soft accompaniment to introit and psalm, then with exultant peal as the Kyrie and Gloria are reached, and during the beautiful hymn "*Victimae paschali laudes.*" Once again appear the white and gold copes of the clergy, and the Cardinal-Archbishop, entering with his crimson train, is solemnly vested at the High Altar, the organ playing gentle music and the strains of the Easter Gloria in the Chapel Royal just reaching us with the opening of a door. No less appropriate to the pomp of the Cathedral, had we space to describe them, are the other great Catholic festivals, especially Corpus Christi, and the "Day of the Taking," both of which are held in particular honour at Granada.

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A walk round the Cathedral, especially if you are led by a kindly canon, will not be without its interest. Its pictures, where not too far off to be seen, are worth studying, especially those by Alonso Cano in the sanctuary, and by his pupil Bocanegra, a St. Francis of El Greco's in a side-chapel, and a Magdalen by Ribera. There are statues here, as well as paintings, by Alonso Cano, who is buried in the choir: notably a Purísima in the sacristy, which has also a crucifix by Montañés. The sixteenth-century glass above the sanctuary, representing the scenes of the Passion, is good, but almost impossible to see in any detail. The ambulatory and dome between them contain no less than forty-four coloured windows; the effect of their rich, pure reds, blues and golds is magnificent, and almost compensates for their excessive height. There is an interesting collection of vestments, including a few in the Mudéjar style, dating practically from the foundation of the Cathedral; some of these are wonderfully embroidered ones, used only on the Día de la Toma, and many others have been presented for use on one day of the year only. Of other treasures, the chief is a *custodia* four feet high, which is used at Corpus Christi, and was given by Queen Isabel for that purpose.

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The Chapel Royal, with its quiet, grassy courtyard and fine Gothic façade, is the part of the Cathedral longest and most clearly remembered. Its interior is at once dignified and restful. The magnificent Renaissance *reja* is among the finest of its kind in Spain. The *retablo* behind the high altar embodies some historical memories—Boabdil surrendering the Alhambra keys and Christian monks baptizing Moorish converts. On either side are *relicarios* containing gifts presented by Fernando and Isabel. In the sacristy are preserved more relics of the Reconquest: one of the flags which first flew over the city, Isabel's sceptre, crown and missal, a chasuble worked by her, and the like. But the glory of the Chapel Royal is to be seen directly behind the *reja*, in the Italian marble tombs of Fernando and Isabel and their daughter and son-in-law Joanna the Mad and Philip the Fair. The detail of these monuments will repay long study, especially that of the Catholic Monarchs, with its lifelike statuettes of bishops at the corners.

As a contrast to this display of Italian art, the simplicity of the vault below the tombs is surprising. Down a few steps there lies a small square chamber with low roof; in the centre are two plain leaden coffins containing the remains of

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the Catholic Monarchs ; round the sides are three coffins more, without inscriptions. That is all.

Of the other churches in Granada many are of interest mainly for their picturesqueness and antiquity, and the higher we mount, the more of these shall we see. Santa Ana, situated where the Darro emerges from its underground channel above the Plaza Nueva, is one of the oldest ; it has a minaret-like tower, a plateresque doorway and a fine Crucifixion and Soledad by the famous Granadine sculptor José de Mora, whose Virgins are justly renowned. San Pedro y San Pablo, just above Santa Ana, is worth looking at for its fine wooden roof. If we climb to the Albaicín by the road to be described in the next chapter, we shall come to San Juan de los Reyes, the base of the tower of which was actually the minaret of a mosque, and to San Salvador and San Nicolás, where we have already stood to admire the view of the Alhambra. San José, some distance away, has in a north chapel the large sculptured Christ by Mora which is carried in procession on the night of Maundy Thursday : this is very typical Andalusian work, combining realism and restraint, and it should not be missed, for it is shown one readily. To penetrate to the church of Santa Isabel la Real, on the other hand, needs

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patience and perseverance, and is rewarded only by more of Alonso Cano and José de Mora: most people are content to walk round the dark and gloomy garden and to admire the elaborate portal of the convent from without.

Down in the city, the ex-convent of San Jerónimo, which has been used as a cavalry barracks since the Napoleonic invasion, is a sadly degraded tribute to Granada's past. It was founded by the Catholic Monarchs in 1492; in its church is buried one of the heroes of Spanish chivalry, Gonzalvo de Córdoba, the "Gran Capitán." What a pathos there is in the prosperity of this city which can allow an ancient convent to fall into such neglect! The church is entered through a dilapidated garden. Within, it is dirty, untidy, ill-lit, disfigured by inartistic mural paintings, and in a continuous state of restoration. There is much to see in it, for it is full of the work of Diego de Siloe. The tomb of the Great Captain is marked by a plain slab beneath the richly adorned sanctuary, which boasts an elaborate sixteenth-century *retablo*, and kneeling figures representing Gonzalvo and his wife. One of the northern chapels has a fine *Sacro Entierro*, or Entombment, in which two of the faces are thought to have been inspired by the Laocoon

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group, recently discovered at the time when it was wrought. The choir, in the west-end gallery, is of much more ample proportions than seems possible from below. Its richly carved stalls are Siloe's: climb up to it if you can, then mount from it, by a dark and insecure staircase, to an open balcony, and look out upon Siloe's beautiful but ill-preserved cloisters.

If San Jerónimo is thought to be suggestive of the baroque, two other Granada churches will satisfy the keenest admirers of that style. The hospital of San Juan de Dios, quite near it, commemorates the Portuguese saint of that name, founder of the order of the Hospitallers. It flourishes greatly, and children's voices can be heard in its courtyards all the day long. But those who, after passing through its simple flowery *patio*, enter the vast eighteenth-century church, are apt to receive a shock. Rows upon rows of benches invite one to sit down and contemplate the most amazing array of wood-gilt imaginable. The huge gilded *retablo* reaches to the roof; more gilt adorns the walls; above the tabernacle are scores of electric lights, and around the church hundreds more. The lay-brother puts his hand to the switches and in a moment the place is grinning at us with a horrible glitter. "Is it not

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an imposing display?" he says, complacently, as he turns off the agony. "And to think that all these marvellous lights were installed by an amateur, a working tailor!"

Then he conducts us up a staircase to a gallery, that we may look at it all again, and finally to a little room behind the high altar of the church and far above it, in the centre of which is a silver casket containing the saint's mortal remains. Two doors are thrown open, and we look down again into the church. In this little chapel a daily mass is said, for there is an altar directly in front of the open doors, and the faithful can see the priest who celebrates there from their seats in the church below.

This chapel is indeed a study in inferior baroque art. Every available inch of its walls and ceiling is gilt: to crowd more glitter into it would be impossible. For those who like such things, it displays also a statue of the head of St. John Baptist, executed with terrible realism. Bloody and grim, the mouth is horribly open, and the neck, severed and bleeding, is exposed to the curiosity (or is it veneration?) of all who see it.

The *ne plus ultra* of the baroque is the Cartuja or secularized Carthusian convent, a little way outside the city, and below the handsome Jesuit

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college and observatory to which it has given its name. Different persons esteem it variously. There can be no two opinions about the badness of the pictures in its cloister, representing the martyrdom of Carthusians in unspeakably repulsive detail. The cloister leads into the refectory, which those who are going to detest what is to come invariably admire. The church affects much gilt and plaster of Paris, but has a wonderfully incrustated door in ivory, silver and mother-of-pearl, Mora's almost speaking St. Bruno, and some pictures by Bocanegra. In the Sagrario, the soft-voiced old woman who takes one round professes a perennially awe-struck admiration at the high, painted dome representing the glory of Heaven, but few can find anything here to admire save the brown and white marble of the Sierra. Our conductor, obviously disappointed at our lack of ardour, announces that we are now about to enter the sacristy. She holds the door closed until our party is fully assembled; then, flinging it open proudly, retires till our astonishment shall have subsided. Indeed, it is hardly possible to restrain a first exclamation of delight at the pure and dazzling whiteness of the broad, high room, and the magnificent brown and white marble altar. Impatience with the exasperating

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artificiality and profusion of the embellishments comes later, if at all, and neither the richness and beauty of the marble nor the skilfully incrustated *cómodas* all around will placate those who had "never imagined it to be quite so perfectly dreadful" as it has proved to be.

There are few things like baroque art which so completely inhibit moderation, whether in praise or blame. In the presence, as it were, of the very spirit of Churriguerra, which runs riot over the super-adornments of those tremendous walls, restraint is hardly possible. Guide-books and handbooks for tourists can generally be relied upon to avoid anything less complimentary than simple eulogy, but not even they can mete out the conventional adjectives here. It was with a real shock that I recently read in the descriptive pages of a well known agency's list of tours: "The Cartuja of Granada, inside, is probably the ugliest building in Europe."

Between Gothic and Baroque, from Christianised mosques to secularised convents, the churches of Granada offer as varied attractions as the towers and palaces of the Alhambra.

VII

THE CITY : NEW AND OLD

IT has already been hinted that, to one of its visitors at least, the city of Granada brings no sentiment but that of sadness. Into the deserted halls of the Alhambra I can conjure mirth, companionship and song. From the gardens of the Generalife and the *cármenes* of the Albaicín I drink deeply of the wine of satisfaction. But in the crowded narrow lanes of the city which emerge so indecently into brilliantly-lighted modern thoroughfares I find an emptiness and a disenchantment of which I hardly know the like in Spain. Is it because in civic progress Granada has fallen so miserably below the standard set by her in mediæval days ? Or because the Gran Vía de Colón, with its pseudo-Parisian shops, only clashes with the romance of the Alhambra ? Or because so few streets are left unmodernised, and so little of the city's character has been preserved ? I do not know. But I know that I am never at rest in the city : I strive to get out of it, and to

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live above it. In some way, or in many ways, it seems unworthy of its fame.

So, now that we have already seen the churches, let us spend the regulation half-day in wandering round the city. We will do it at tourist pace for once, if you please, and to-morrow you can return to the spots which attract you, while I will remain in my *soledad* above the Generalife and chatter to Pilarcita, who I suspect will be no longer gathering poppies when I return. For I left her this morning collecting eggshells from all her acquaintances, so as to place them upside down on the points of the cactuses which line the path to the wine-shop, and on which prospective customers are apt to tear their raiment.

She is more of a humanitarian than some children of Granada that I know, especially with regard to animals. To see Pilar caressing her father's sleek grey donkey is an experience rarely paralleled round here, where the ass is a common drudge, overloaded and underfed, and never made as much of as it deserves. The other day I saw a boy of five feet or more standing upright on the back of an already laden donkey watching a funeral. To see the poor beasts bearing loads they can hardly carry is common—panniers of cabbages or grass which completely weigh them down or

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men of patriarchal aspect and corpulence unsurpassed. Perhaps the most pathetic donkey I have ever seen I met in a Granada side street. His two panniers were laden to overflowing with garbage from the street and the houses, and the poor little starving wretch was twisting round his head, quite unsuccessfully, in an attempt to reach a decayed cabbage-leaf protruding from his left-hand pannier. I gave that donkey some sugar. Pilarcita says I should never do that: I don't know why. I often do.

But though the donkey is common in Granada, I associate the city first and foremost with goats. These look happy and well-fed, and are a priceless asset to a district where cows are rare and goat's milk is the food of the people. See them, black and brown, in their twos and threes, at any hour of the morning, ambling reposefully along the principal thoroughfares, or waiting patiently to be milked outside the filthy houses of the filthier side streets, taking up most, if not all, of the pavement, and, while a woman squats down and milks one of their number—from behind—spending their time in calmly eating the white-wash, in spite of their muzzles, from the walls of adjoining houses. Occasionally upon the tinkle of the goat-bells there obtrudes the deeper note

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of a cow-bell, for the cow, when milked at all, is also milked in the street, "on demand." But it seems always to be submitting under protest, and gives relatively far less than the goat, whose udder indeed is generally so full that it can hardly walk.

In spite of its few smart thoroughfares, Granada is by no means a sanitary city. Small boys with yards of hose-pipe between their legs may drench the streets at intervals, but the days of open drains never seem far away—nor, for that matter, are the drains themselves. Unfortunately the best sights are often near the foulest smells. If we plunge into the mass of dirty side-streets without caution, we may, or may not, meet both. It might have been in Granada and not in Naples (or was it Genoa ?) that the cynical tourist-agent, when asked the way to get to the finest churches, replied : *Follow your nose !*

Wherever we make the plunge into the side-streets of the lower city we shall probably before long reach a large and central square, the Bibar-rambla, once the scene of jousts and pageants in both Moslem and Christian days. Now no memory of these is left. A statue of Fray Luis de Granada, the famous sixteenth-century preacher and mystic, stands in the centre of the square,

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which is dull and entirely modernised. Leading from it to the Plaza Nueva is the once noted street of the Zacatín, the Sierpes of Granada, paved and closed to traffic, and containing formerly the chief bazaars of the city.

Of the two main streets called after Columbus and the Catholic Monarchs we need say nothing, but following the latter downwards, we come to the *Carrera*, or Avenue, of the Genil, which leads to the river of that name, to the statue representing Isabel receiving Columbus after the Reconquest, and to the lovely garden walks beside it known as the Salón and the Bomba. When the poet Zorrilla apostrophised Granada as “reposing amid flowers”—

Granada, ciudad bendita,
Reclinada sobre flores,—

he may well have been thinking of such spots as these. Palm and fir, chestnut, orange and fig, magnolia and plane-tree blend surprisingly; and there is never a lack of bloom, be it in the depth of winter, which in Granada means violet-time, or in the dog-days when only the hardiest flowers have survived the dust and heat. But the season of all others for these gardens is spring—the flower-laden month of March, or April with its

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wistaria and roses. For their background of mountains is still one mass of sunlit snow, the Genil flows steadily over its pebbly bed, and the walks are made lovely by a profusion of blossom, most of all by that gay tree-flower which we discourteously term the Judas-tree, christened more aptly by the Spaniards the Tree of Love. Well-named, for its blossoms appear before its leaves, and so great is their abundance that it scatters them on the ground; yet sadly named, for in a week or two its beauty is quickly over and all that can be seen is fruit hanging in dark, heavy bunches. Of all the trees I know, this is the most brilliant when in flower: a single one, for example, lights up the gloomy *plaza* in front of the Seo at Zaragoza: it cannot be forgotten. And in the Paseo de la Bomba its clumps of blossom burgeon from the base of their trunk; in whichever direction we walk a rosy carpet is spread before us; and as we look up from this to the snow we seem to see reflected for a moment or more the same warm hue.

Here you might wish to linger, but good tourists linger nowhere, so let us back to the city, for you have seen nothing of the old town yet. On the way a short detour will take us past the University, which has an interesting library, a

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dignified open staircase, and a bright little *patio*, in term-time alive with a typically southern animation. The students, crossing and recrossing it, walking round it in pairs, pouring in and out of the lecture-rooms, gesticulating as they talk like Spaniards good and true, give it life; while colour is provided by the Collegers from St. Bartholomew and St. James, whose black gowns have broad sashes (called *becas*) of bright blue, in conformity with ancient custom.

Now we return to the Reyes Católicos and make straight for the Albaicín, crossing the Plaza Nueva after glancing at the handsome Audiencia and its ample *patio* to the left, and mounting the Carrera de Darro, where the river of that name emerges from its subterranean channel. A picturesque street is this, with whitewashed houses on the left, and more of them across the turbid stream on the right, a fig-tree here and there overhanging the Darro, and an occasional single-span bridge connecting the two sides. As we mount the stream, the cliffs to the right grow higher, and the Alhambra towers come into view, with glimpses of farther hills, woods and occasional country houses. Then the road debouches into a shady avenue, known as the Paseo de los Tristes, from its being on the road usually taken to the

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Cemetery. A little *plazuela* lies to the right of the avenue, from which there is a fine view of the Alhambra, its foundations swathed in the foliage of trees which cover the hillside.

One of the sights of this part of Granada is the Bañuelo in the Carrera de Darro, a thermal bath dating probably from Roman times but adapted very considerably by the Moors. Characteristically, it is in a filthy and uncared-for state: some poor people inhabit it, and allow visitors to see the anteroom, the circular main chamber and the reclining-room, and also to pass up, from outside, to the roof, and look down into the central chamber through the apertures in the rough grey stone.

Not much better is the condition of the Casa del Chapiz, a deserted palace with fine wooden ceilings, constructed in the Moorish style in the early sixteenth century: it deserved a better fate than for its lower rooms to be used as a bakery and its upper rooms for storing brushwood for the ovens. Some day, let us hope, Granada will preserve these rapidly vanishing relics of her past.

To reach the Casa del Chapiz we have turned sharply to the left up a steep hill bordered with acacias, past the celebrated Ave Maria schools of the Padre Manjón—now subsidised by the city—

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where tiny tots are taught by modern methods in beautiful gardens, well deserving of a visit. All their work, in winter and summer alike, save on rare rainy days, is done in the open air. On the ground are relief maps of Spain, Europe and the World ; on the walls of the gardens are pictures, genealogical trees and tables of facts and dates.

The children themselves are drawn from the lowest classes, and their faces suggest that we are near Granada's gipsy quarter, as indeed we are. Mounting the slope. we attract a procession of screaming and begging gutter-children, women selling castanets at twice their market price and ten times their value, girls thrusting flowers into our hands and refusing to go without payment, children—almost babies—striking attitudes in our path and requesting us to photograph them or pay them to perform some dance. In all parts of the Albaicín quarter these unsavoury pests attack any foreigner they can find. Does he knock at the door of a house ? Immediately a dozen brats surround him. A rare policeman may chance to pass by and frighten them away, but he will hardly have turned the corner than they will be back, doubled in numbers, all unwashed, unclothed—or very nearly—and unashamed, screaming to the foreigner to knock again and knock

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louder, shrieking unmelodious applause the while and in the same breath demanding, for their advice, rewards of "sinco séntimos." Needless to say, if the foreigner is foolish enough to give to them, their number miraculously doubles, and he may be sure that if, on entering the house, he leaves them behind, they will be waiting for him patiently when he emerges. As a matter of actual fact, I counted thirty-one such children round a party of strangers—some of them Spaniards, some foreigners—who were calling on an inhabitant of the Albaicín, and fifty-seven admiring a cab from which there had just alighted two English boys, of whom one was wearing plus-fours, and the other had been unwise enough to count his change in public.

Not all these urchins, of course, are gipsies: many of them are Spanish through and through. And, if the truth must be told, there is no city in Spain where the tourist is more molested than in Granada. Set a foreigner in the middle of an empty square, and in five minutes, when you return, you will find him completely surrounded by begging children. Ask your way in a side street, and half-a-dozen ragamuffins spring upon you. Bootblacks, old and young, assail you all the day, with their eternal "Limpia!" pointing in a

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meaning way at your dusty shoes as they cry. Cabmen hiss at you determinedly, and beckon you to their cabs : if you pass but close enough to them, they will even nudge you or tap you on the shoulder. The professional beggars in front of the churches are relatively placid, but the children in blue or in brown holland pinafores who haunt the gipsy quarter make up for them in importunity, extolling your beauty, charm and generosity, addressing you as *señorito* endearingly, rubbing berry-brown faces against your sleeve, and generally following out their queer notions of gradual ingratiating.

Those who find them no disadvantage may dally in the gipsy quarter, which they chiefly infest,—backsheesh thrown by visitors in motor-cars being more plentiful there than elsewhere. Such visitors may inspect the notorious cave-dwellings, where, since 1532, there have been gipsies (many of them half-Spanish) living outside the city boundary, paying no taxes, doing no work and bringing nothing but discredit upon the city. Their children speak execrable Spanish, and are exempt from school attendances, though a school has recently been started and inducements are being offered them to attend it.

If a sight of the interior of those caves attracts

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you, it is yours for such largesse as you are prepared to part with : for the performance of so-called gipsy-dances, however, you must barter. Then you may retrace your steps, and, if on foot, reach the Albaicín proper by a winding stony lane, below the cactus slopes, covered with all kinds and degrees of filth. Once arrived, there is much to see. Many of the industries of Granada are located here. A whitewashed cottage turns out to be the sales department of a manufactory of blue Granada pottery. In an old house in the Moorish style, with some well-restored windows, carpets are made by girls singing gaily at their looms, and rugs are sold, the work of peasants in the Alpujarra mountains.

Round this corner and that we catch glimpses of the walls of churches already described, and of the various gates by which the city was once entered. But the one and only reward which compensates the visitor for braving the discomforts of the Albaicín, and for losing his way among its filth and odours, is to be found in the beauty of the *cármenes* which blossom in its very heart like roses on a dunghill. How people with means enough to live in country houses surrounded by acres of garden can endure such an approach to their villas is hard to imagine : but the fact

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remains that they do. Secure behind high walls, their bliss would be unsuspected by a mere passer-by. For there is nothing but squalor in the winding, cobbled lanes, narrow and steep, with gutters, receptacles for filth, running down them, and faintly lit at night by iron lamps fixed in the walls. The streets serve as a playground to the olive-skinned children, in various stages of undress, who run about them; as an unrestricted promenade to scores of aimlessly wandering goats; and as a nursery to the women with babies at their breasts or crawling around them as they sit and take the fetid air at the doors of their houses.

The odours rise to the blue heaven above, and, save in that lovely Andalusian sky, the stranger would despair of finding any beauty here whatever. Yet in such a setting he may behold some white wall with a pointed cypress towering above it, and climbing over it clusters and sprays of golden rambler roses. That is the most he will see of the *carmen* from without, but, if he can find a reason to seek admittance, he will pass as likely as not from purgatory to paradise.

Here, a door, opened as it were at random, reveals a long path, gay on either side with carnations, leading to a low, white vine-clad

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cottage with a view from its terrace over the Sierra. There, a precisely similar door opens at the head of a short flight of steps, the cold and damp strike one's forehead clammily, and at the foot of the steps lies a tiny sunken Arab *patio*, with tall trees at the corners, their branches almost touching overhead. Here, again, a gateway of antique design admits one to a walled garden so vast that it might be in the midst of the country : its perspectives are only less amazing than those of the Alhambra.

Two Albaicín *cármenes* above all the rest remain in the memory. Nuestra Señora del Pilar is built in terraces on the western side of the hill, at a point so steep that the Cathedral seems but a stone's throw below it. A section of the earliest of the Arab walls bounds it, and overlooks the church of San Cristóbal, the cactus-covered hills and the gipsy caves. A trellised vine assures us of the genuineness of the *carmen*. Masses of heliotrope, lilac and syringa do their best to make us forget the vine—and everything else, indeed, but themselves, for so long as we remain there. Roses : one could bathe in them. Wistaria, blue and white : the bees, making honey while the sun shines, drown our talk.

More stately, and more secluded, is the

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exquisite Carmen of Alonso Cano—on the site of that sculptor's ancient house—terraced likewise, but overlooking the ruddy Alhambra towers and the Sierra beyond them. To the left is the old house with handsome grilles to its windows, a sixteenth-century well and a fountain of the same period. That the terraces are white with syringa and roses one need hardly say, but they are planted also with lemon-trees, bearing fruit of enormous size, with almond-trees and fig-trees heavily laden, and quinces, pomegranates and oranges in abundance. Six cypresses in a row guard the entrance to the house. At the foot of the garden is a cool summer pavilion, completely covered with ivy. And on the broad veranda of the house one can sit till dusk, and gaze at the disappearing panorama, then return to it in the moonlight to revel in new vistas; new perfumes and new silence—completely hidden, and for the time oblivious of the terrors that await one without.

VIII

VILLAGE, PLAIN AND MOUNTAIN

WE have explored the city of the Alhambra: let us leave it, as we entered it, by way of its environs, and take farewell of it from afar. Already we have wandered over the hills that look down upon the Darro, and in the opposite direction have invaded the pleasant sanctities of the Jesuit College and Observatory. There are many more walks than these round Granada. In the cliffs above the Paseo de la Bomba, can be seen caves like those of the gipsies in surroundings of equal squalor, but of comparative peace. Up the Darro valley is the Hazel Spring—the Fuente del Avellano, called by the Moors the Fountain of Tears—whence still, as in their day, caravans of donkeys laden with water-cans can be seen descending at sundown. This was a spring especially beloved of the famous son of Granada, Angel Ganivet, whose ashes were recently brought from abroad and re-interred in his native city: a statue to his memory will be



THE ALHAMBRA FROM THE GENERALIFE

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noticed in one of the most charming corners of the Alameda.

Above the gipsy caves and the model school, on a high hill approached by a long and shady road with seven turns, is the Seminary of the Sacro Monte, where visitors often climb for the sake of the view. Lovely it is, indeed, especially at evening time, for distance lends it enchantment, and the Alhambra is not only far away, but is seen from an entirely new angle and elevation. Nor is a walk round the Abbey of the Sacro Monte to be despised, if one of the fourteen canons who live there can be persuaded to don his green-tasselled biretta and accompany one. Beneath the abbey (a foundation some three centuries old), is a perfect labyrinth of caverns—the “Sacred Caves”—which faintly recalls the Catacombs. The delight of the place is that it is soaked in tradition and legend, and I have no doubt that a few discreet questions will set our genial canon recounting them all.

He will take us back through Moorish and Roman times. He will show us an oven-cave into which Christian martyrs are supposed to have been thrust alive. He will travel, if you show no incredulity, as far back as the first century A.D., even to the converts made by St. James of Spain himself.

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“And is all this really true?” you will inquire at last with some timidity.

“Ah, as to that,” he replies, twinkling “*creemos piadosamente*—it is our *pious* belief . . .” (twinkling again). The distinction between belief and pious belief is a nice one.

But not so long after the Reconquest of Granada there was a great and authentic sensation in Sacro Monte, for some sheets of lead were discovered bearing inscriptions which embodied a fusion of Mohammedan and Christian beliefs. After much discussion, authority decided that they were forgeries of Moorish origin, but not before attention had been aroused by them far and wide. So the sheets were sealed up and buried from sight, behind the *retablo*, on either side of the High Altar of the chapel.

More interesting than Sacro Monte, perhaps, are those little villages, away out on the Vega, where you may pick up stories of the Moorish and Christian armies in the last fierce years of the fifteenth century. Even for their own quiet sakes they are worth a visit—unspoiled little corners of the world of every day where life is primitive and simple. In them the pump and the washing-ground are the women’s places of

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meeting. To them the church means everything : the village inn is called St. Peter's, the olive oil factory St. Mary Magdalen, and the tiny snow-white *venta*, on the road outside, Our Lady of the Snows. Tinker, tailor and basket-maker ply their trades in the street, with tools and trophies of their professions spread around them. The scavenger (if there is one) picks up manure with his hands, and the common drain (if there is one) is cleansed by the breeze, so fresh and sweet is the air. So narrow are the rough unpaved streets and lanes that a single panniered donkey seems to fill one, and a yoke of those wonderful oxen of the district give the impression of being too big to pass. Children never (or hardly ever) molest the stranger in these villages, gazes of unfeigned curiosity being their only comments on his presence.

Starting from Granada, and crossing the broad dry bed of the Genil, we may first of all look at the little chapel of San Sebastián, which marks as exactly as possible the spot where King Fernando met Boabdil and received the keys from him as he left the surrendered city. Then we speed over the long, dusty, plane-lined Motril road, in the direction of the distant hills, low and sunlit, which lie to the south-west. Beyond the straight

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village street of Armilla, where Queen Isabel remained to receive Boabdil after the surrender while the King went on into the city, we turn off to the right, leaving far on our left the Ultimo Suspiro del Moro, (Last Sigh of the Moor), as that hill is called which the Unfortunate King mounted to look for the last time at the towers and minarets of his city. "Allah is great!" he is reported to have cried, using the words of resignation which come so easily to Moslem lips, "Allah is great! Had ever king such misfortunes as are mine!"

His self-control gave way, and he burst into tears. But his mother, who so often had spurred his irresolution into action, came to his side indignantly. "Thou dost well," she cried, "to weep like a woman for that which thou couldst not defend like a man." The sentence has passed, perhaps unjustly, as a judgment upon the character of Boabdil el Chico.

We leave the Ultimo Suspiro, and before us, at the foot, as it seems from afar, of those low and sunny hills, lies Gavia la Grande, a typical Granadine village, amid acres of oats and olives, and looking towards the rocky Sierra of Elvira. It is an undistinguished little place, quite dominated by the spire of its modern church, the mats

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hung in front of the doors of its houses hardly serving to keep out the dust and flies, and the clouds of dust in the distance, raised by passing carts, showing only too clearly which are the principal approaches to the village. Often hardly a soul is to be seen in the place, and the swallows, sweeping to and fro, seem to be searching a village of the dead.

More interesting than Gabia is La Zubia, due south of Granada, for it was here that Queen Isabel, at her earnest request, was led from the camp at Santa Fe that she might look upon the city which she hoped before long to win.

So splendid was the array in which she advanced with her escort across the Vega, that the Moors supposed the Christians to be about to offer battle and moved forward to meet them. Here, according to tradition, took place the combat between Tarfe the Moor and the young Christian Garcilasso : Tarfe, who had provoked the exploit of Pérez del Pulgar, appeared before the Christian army bearing Pulgar's *Ave Maria* tied to his horse's tail and dragging in the dust, whereupon Garcilasso rode into La Zubia, received the King's permission to challenge the Moor, and slew him.

An atrocious road runs out to La Zubia over

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country unusually fertile even for the Vega—a continuous stretch of olive-groves, vineyards and cornfields and gardens of acacia and syringa. If you take the usual circuitous route, as though heading for the snow, through Huétor Vega, and then turn off, the village may seem much farther away than it is. But climb from those dead little streets, as they sleep in the summer sun, to some commanding spot above them, and at once you will see the Alhambra in the way that Isabel saw it. For the road has described a right angle, and La Zubia lies on a gentle slope, from which Granada seems quite near, and the outskirts of the city no more than a stone's throw.

A clean and pleasant little village is La Zubia. It contains no sights, unless you count a convent founded by the Queen, for the place from which she is said to have watched the battle is occupied to-day by a modern house, and tall buildings, shuttered and heavily barred, reveal no romantic secrets. But perhaps that is as it should be, for the site's the thing.

Some visitors to Granada may wish to go out to Santa Fe, where the Catholic Monarchs pitched the last of their camps, that ill-fated camp, a little city of silk and brocade, which caught fire

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on a summer night of 1491, and was re-founded within eighty days—a wonderful feat—as a city of bricks and mortar. No story in the annals of the Reconquest makes more thrilling reading than the account of how the camp was found to be in flames, how the Marquis of Cádiz rode out with three thousand horse at dead of night to prevent the Moors from attacking, and how at daybreak, when the extent of the disaster must of necessity become manifest, the Christians sallied forth from the ruins, with pennons flying and music playing joyfully, to signify how unconquerable was their spirit.

The way to Santa Fe lies westward through the Vega, planted thickly with oats and barley, wheat and beans, olive and vine, while to the vivid green of the crops scarlet poppies and the graceful wild gladiolus lend variety of colour. Even the bare, gaunt hills on the right, close to the road, are diversified with patches of green cornfield, and as far as the eye can reach—perhaps as far as the low line of hills on the opposite horizon—the country is as fruitful as can be.

As the traveller follows this road he is in the midst of historic memories, though to be sure there is little enough to suggest it. Atarfe seems ordinary enough—just a brown and white village clustering round a tall brown church, but it was

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not far from here that, sixty years before Granada fell, Mohammed VIII was vanquished at the famous Battle of the Fig-tree. Not a difficult fact for the brown-skinned children who run about the streets to remember, for fig-trees, laden with fruit, are all around.

Santa Fe itself, it must be confessed, is undistinguished to look upon: its construction in the appropriate form of a cross is no longer evident, its four gates have vanished, and only the lance and parchment engraven above the door of the Church recall the exploit of Pérez del Pulgar and Garcilasso's victory over the Moor. Nor is there any abiding record of the visit of Columbus to Queen Isabel at the time of the Reconquest, when he pleaded with her to sanction and finance his great expedition across the seas, and so inaugurate an era of discovery which should be no less glorious than the age of strife just concluded. He failed, so it seemed, and had already left the camp in dejection, when the royal messenger overtook him and led him back to hear the Queen's noble promise. "I will assume the undertaking," she told him, "for my own crown of Castile, and, should the riches of my treasury be insufficient, I am prepared to pledge my very jewels to defray the cost of the enterprise."

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Not far away is Pinos Puente—less attractive in fact than in name, in spite of its pleasant little stream and Roman bridge, the scene of many a bloody battle between the Moors defending the Vega, and the ravaging Spanish armies. Here, it is commonly said—though I am not sure with how much truth—Columbus was overtaken by the messenger, on the occasion just referred to. More historic is the famous combat, not long before the Reconquest, when the two Moorish generals, having failed to rally their forces before the fierce assault of the Christians, placed themselves, with a handful of men, at the head of the bridge, till Fernando's troops marched on,—towards Granada, indeed, but over their dead bodies. Since they chanced to be brothers, and the governors of two strongholds which had recently fallen, the event passed into legend, and their memory is still honoured as it deserves.

Not far from Pinos, once lay Elvira, a Roman foundation and a Spanish town of note as early as the fourth century. This had already disappeared before the Reconquest, but its place is taken to-day by a hamlet of the same name, at the foot of the bare, gray hills, which has grown up around some hot springs and their *balneario*.

The best part of a visit to any of these villages

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is the return from it. For then one can see Granada much as the Catholic Monarchs saw it, from Santa Fe—as a smaller and less extensive town in appearance, than seen from Gambia—lying, as it were, against the purple slopes, with the snow-bound Sierra above it. The towers of the Alhambra are easily discerned amid the houses and the groves which surround them. A fair prize, indeed, it must have seemed to those whose covetousness as well as their religious zeal served to whet the appetite of their desire.

To the north of Granada the villages have less interest. The Palacio de Cuzco at Vízcar, built by a colonial Spanish bishop in the seventeenth century, is a fine house with an old-style terraced garden : beyond the village is the Fuente Grande, a pleasant spot in summer, and the Sierra de Alfácar. The railway line to Iznalloz and Moreda is known to most visitors to Granada. Fewer have visited Beas, where there lived, for some years, the greatest of Spanish mystics, St. John of the Cross, or have taken that superb motor-ride over the hills to the historic town of Guadix, founded by the Moors; reconquered not long before Granada, and like it the home to-day of many gipsies.

But the best excursion of all to be made from

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Granada is up the valley of the Genil to the slopes of the Sierra Nevada. Few who see that snowy range from afar suspect how beautiful, and how accessible, are its lower slopes. A tramway service runs one out to Güéjar-Sierra in a little over an hour—a picturesque ten-mile journey, up the Genil, through a land of fig-trees and olive trees, with bare red hills on either side. For the sake of the walker, clean, whitewashed *ventas* and *merenderos* punctuate the route till we reach the mountain village of Pinos-Genil, where the road ends, and the track climbs high above the stony bed of the stream, tunnels the cliffs, runs beneath huge boulders which seem as if they might any day fall upon it, and eventually emerges in a region more fertile, if anything, than that below. The murmur of streams and the rush of waterfalls explain this surprising fruitfulness, all due to the melting of the distant snow.

Beyond Güéjar-Sierra, a path leads upward for a couple of miles to the "Hotel of the Duke," which a local aristocrat has built in a nest of foliage with an unrivalled view. There one may rest, and (except in mid-season) enjoy the bliss of solitude, drinking in the health and beauty of the mountains all around. But most of those who sojourn there will find that the shimmer

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of the snow beyond it urges them upward. The rose-bowers of the ducal gardens, and the shade of the poplar groves below, are but ephemeral delights beside the instinct-impelling heights above.

Scarcely a dwelling of any kind is to be seen. No human being, save some solitary climber, stirs. The only life is that of butterfly and lizard; the only sounds, the murmur of the rivulet far below, and the rush of air which sweeps the ridges and crests. No attraction is here but that which spurs the climber, unless it be to linger in in some spot o'erhung by a spreading tree, to contemplate the velvety slopes across the valley, to search for the mountain viola, the rare yellow oxlip and the white Nevada crocus; or to lie on the sunny mountain-side, oblivious of all, till the shadows creep across the range and the sun goes down over the now invisible and unremembered city. But most of those who elect to stay alone among these hills will press upward, mounting ridge upon ridge, until they reach the outpost line of the Genil's snows, whence, continuing upward still, they can climb some one of the crests of the Sierra and revel in that which for so long they have looked at from afar.

Quien no ha visto la Sierra Nevada, no ha visto

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Granada. Thus we may vary the well-known Sevillian proverb. To any who have once known the Sierra, it must always be the culminating point of a sojourn in the city of the Alhambra. Even to see it from afar, as it dominates city and plain, is to be carried out of one's petty sight-seeing self and projected into past ages of world-history. To mount even a portion of one's self-made path to its heights, to live in its solitude, to sleep in its embrace, and to awake at dawn among its snows, is an experience more uplifting yet, which takes us out of the realm of history, and even of time, into those lofty and rarely trodden regions where time itself waits upon our pleasure.

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SANTANDER

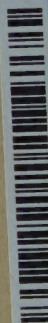
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